

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY  
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BULLETIN

No. 6 Part 2

May

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LIVING BUDDHISM  
IN JAPAN

A report of  
Interviews with Ten Japanese  
Buddhist Leaders

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Kokusai Shūkyō Kenkyū Sho  
2—1 Nishi Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo  
Tel. 29—4231

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## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

(Kokusai Shūkyō Kenkyū Sho)

The International Institute for the Study of Religions is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization incorporated by the Ministry of Education of the Japanese Government.

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## LIVING BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

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Note: Bulletin No. 6 Part 1 containing the Japanese report of these interviews will be sent, on request, to any member of the Institute.



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IMAOKA Shin'ichirō*	Director, Japan Free Religion League.
KANEKO Daiei (JS)	Professor Emeritus of Ōtani University, Priest of the Ōtani Sect, Jōdo Shin Buddhism.
KARIYA Nichinin (N)	President of Hokke Sectarian Academy, Priest of Hokke Sect, Nichiren Buddhism.
KUBOTA Shōbun* (N)	Professor of Risshō and Meiji Universities, Priest of the Nichiren Sect.
MASUTANI Fumio* (J)	Professor of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Lecturer at Tokyo and Taishō Universities, Jōdo Buddhist.
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SHIMIZUDANI Kyōjun (T)	Chief Abbot of Sensōji (Asakusa Kannon Temple) of Tendai Buddhism.
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TAMAKI Kōshirō	Non-sectarian Buddhist.
YASUMOTO Tōru	Yūzūnenbutsu Sect.
YOSHIOKA Gihō	Chizan Sect, Shingon Buddhism.

\* Those marked with an asterisk are either directors or councillors of the Institute.

# LIVING BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

## Foreword

Most Japanese are traditionally Buddhists but there is a wide difference of opinion as to what Buddhism really means. In most cases people merely act unconsciously in accordance with past customs.

For some time the International Institute for the Study of Religions has seen the necessity of clarifying what everyday Buddhism is. This is not apparent simply from a study of the sūtras or even the founders' writings. It can only be acquired by means of direct contact with persons who are actually living as Buddhists. Even then it is not easy to study this subject which covers most of the Japanese people. Therefore, Mr. Yoshirō Tamura of Tōyō University was requested to interview persons, who are regarded as leaders of the Buddhist world, regarding what they think and what they are doing. This Bulletin is the result. Mr. Tamura's questions sound mild but they hit the point. They are like a scalpels in an operation on Buddhism. Buddhists reading this report will no doubt find much to think about in reference to the future of their faith.

Hajime Nakamura

Professor of Indian Philosophy  
Tokyo University

## Introduction

Buddhism is one of the principal religions of Japan. A large majority of the Japanese people are nominally Buddhists. Nevertheless, there is considerable difference of opinion among both Japanese and foreigners as to what Buddhism is. This is particularly true in regard to what modern Buddhist leaders are thinking and teaching.

Although Japanese Buddhism is based on the scriptures of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the faith has undergone considerable modification in this country during the thirteen centuries which have elapsed since it was introduced from Korea in the middle of the sixth century of this era. Consequently, Japanese Buddhism is unique in many respects. It differs not only from Thera-vāda, that is, Southern or Hīna-yāna Buddhism, but also from the Mahā-yāna Buddhism of other Asian countries. Moreover, as will be noted in reading this bulletin, there is a considerable variety of interpretation among Japanese Buddhists themselves, even among those who come from the same general schools of thought.

To understand Japanese Buddhism, then, simply reading the scriptures or the writings of the founders of the various sects is not enough. It is necessary to penetrate the minds of those who are currently influencing the thought and actions of the Buddhists today and, in so far as possible, to study the thoughts and actions of the masses who call themselves Buddhist.

The project reported in this Bulletin was undertaken in order to discover what ten Buddhist leaders are thinking in regard to some fundamental questions which confront Japanese as individuals and Japanese society as a whole. The questions selected were not intended to constitute a comprehensive survey of Buddhist thought.



## INTRODUCTION

On the contrary, they were picked somewhat at random from among subjects which the interviewer, himself a Buddhist, had heard discussed very frequently in Buddhist circles. Admittedly the treatment is introductory. The approach was that of a young man seeking guidance from a teacher or respected friend. The interviews, each of which lasted two hours, were tape-recorded, transcribed, and then edited. After that a summary was prepared in Japanese and submitted to the persons interviewed for correction and approval. Finally, an English translation was made for presentation in this Bulletin; but this was not submitted to the participants for their approval. For any errors in translation the translator and editor assume joint responsibility. A bound volume of the edited transcripts of the full interviews in Japanese is available in the Institute library. As time permits, full English translations will also be prepared for reference purposes, but there is no plan to publish these.

This summary of the interviews constitutes a pioneer pilot project in providing reliable reference material for those who are interested in understanding Living Buddhism in Japan today. In the near future, further studies will be made which it is hoped will present a cross-section of the thinking of the common worshippers. Superficial as these studies must inevitably appear to the specialist, it is hoped that they will open up new vistas of understanding for the average student interested in contemporary religion in Japan.

The undersigned is deeply conscious of his own inadequacy for this undertaking. He has learned more than he is able to impart to others. Every effort has been made to present the thinking of participants as accurately as possible. For any failure to do so he offers his sincere apology to the participants and to the reader.

Yoshirō Tamura

Associate Professor of Buddhism  
Tōyō University, Tokyo, Japan





## I. THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE

**Main Question:** The struggle for existence today is very severe. We live as if controlled by the ticking of the clock. How often we ask ourselves: "What is the significance of our daily life?" Our feelings become so desperate that we even begin to think that there is nothing after death. Being unable any longer to find spiritual support in the morality and religion, which we have been taught, we reach a state in which we can find nothing authoritative. This is especially true of the youth of today. What do you think of this?

**KUBOTA (N):** The main reason why people lack a purpose for living must lie in the fact that their problems can no longer be solved on the basis of loyalty and patriotism which hitherto was efficacious. From the standpoint of our Buddhist faith, the highest objective of life is to become a buddha (*hotoke* 仏). Everything—study, work, rest—should constitute a discipline and a means of becoming a buddha. The idea that nothing continues after death does not arise from the Buddhist faith. Buddhism does not say that the life that dwells in the body perishes at the moment the body dies. Figuratively speaking, even when an electric bulb is broken and ceases to radiate light, the electric current itself continues to exist.

**MASUTANI (J):** People in the past tried to find some significance in life by picturing to themselves the Pure Land (*jōdo* 浄土), or a paradise (*tengoku* 天国) after death; but this is difficult for moderns. As a modern, I think that the true Buddhist way is to put the objective (*mokuhyō* 目標) for human life in this world by setting up ideals (*risō* 理想) here. Buddhism has the concept of a future life, but the essential character of Buddhism lies in making every effort possible under existing conditions.

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**Q:** In what can we find support for this? Actually, we can find no reliable ground, no support or objective in the present world. Therefore, we cannot be satisfied with only these essentials in Buddhism to which you have just referred.

Buddhism stresses ideals (*negai* 願). For example, it says: "Hard is it to be born into human life. We now live it."\* This means that since we have received this precious life, we must live it splendidly, as long as we live. This also is an ideal. A more concrete example is found in the *Dai Kichijō Kyō* 大吉祥経 (*Mahā-mangala-sutta*, Pāli) of *Sutta-nipāta*, which says in effect that the highest ideal for man, the supreme happiness, is to attend one's parents with devotion, to support one's family with love, and to be engaged in honorable work. In short, everything in life is decided on the basis of whether or not one has an ideal. When young men seek employment, many of them try to find a position much as they would take a chance in a lottery. However, unless they endeavor to work with an ideal as their objective, their lives will be totally meaningless. The hours spent will be only an exchange of labor for money.

**KARIYA (N):** From the viewpoint of the spirit of the Lotus Sūtra, mankind lives interdependent with all things (*issai to tomo ni ikite iru*. 一切と共に生きている).\*\* Man is born in this world in order to live with others. I am living for others. They are living for me. This is the true nature of life. The purpose of chanting *Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō* 南無妙法蓮華経 is to grasp this meaning of life. We are made to live a life of mutual interdependence with all things. This is the Wonderful Law (*Myōhō* 妙法). All earthly life depends upon this true Law.

**KANEKO (JS):** I think that the significance of living lies in finding the true ideal (*negai* 願) as man. Looking at it from the reverse

\* Translation follows "Shinshū Seiten" published by the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, 1955.

\*\* This expression is unique with Prof. Kariya.

## THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE

side, I think, to discover the meaning is to discover an ideal. Doesn't the demand for ideals arises from the fact that life has become meaningless? If one has an ideal, whatever he may do, his work will constitute a means of its fulfillment and thus produce a sense of satisfaction. Furthermore, what is important for us is that we have a religious mind or a religious need at the depth of our being, which causes us to reflect or to feel that life is insignificant. The religious mind is a kind of instinct just like working and eating. It is neither logic nor imagination. Artificial religion may be destroyed or be regarded with skepticism, but the fundamental religious mind cannot be denied. Therefore, religion appears at all times in some form or other.

**NISHITANI (P):** In case the moral or religious authority, which has hitherto been taught, is questioned, we must reconsider whether or not it really was truly moral or religious. For example, patriotism has moral meaning, but it may also take on an aspect of national egotism. In other words, patriotism may have a moral or immoral character, according to one's standpoint. In this sense, a grave question arises from the notion that one is being steadily supported by something which he regards as moral authority. As for religious authority, that is even more questionable. Religious problems are not truly clarified until religious authority breaks down and gives place to desperation. Something which has hitherto been deemed religion, may never have been religion in the true sense, at least for him.

**Q:** Has religion any significance as a guide for our lives?

I have frequently been asked this question. In such cases it often seems that the questioner himself is standing on the outside of what is taking place. However, to take such an attitude in asking about the significance of religion, is very questionable. As long as one has such an attitude, it means that he does not really have any deep



religious need. When one has a genuine religious need, the meaning of religion is not the issue. He will be in such a desperate state that without religion his life is felt to be utterly meaningless.

What constitutes religious need? The appearance of a need shows that the fundamental meaning of life has changed. It becomes clear that that which alone has constituted support or given meaning to life does not actually provide a true purpose for living. A need which can be called religious does not appear until such a condition arises. Taking as an example the problem of death, life can never be considered apart from death. It often happens that, when one contacts a serious disease or comes to the gates of death, he can no longer be satisfied merely with what has hitherto constituted for him the meaning of life. The same can be said when a lover leaves his beloved, or when one fails in his life work. In such cases, a religious mind emerges and the meaning of religion is spontaneously understood. Therefore, it may be said that in so far as a person asks what religions means, he has not yet attained a state in which such a question can be raised. I think that we could better solve the problem, if instead of discussing this question, we discussed the person who asks the question.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** Many modern young men are leading materialistic lives and attaching much importance to their present actual world. Their sphere of life is limited to the visible world, which immediately surrounds them and in which their only desire is to enjoy their daily life. They think that with the death of the body everything is reduced to nothing. Therefore, they can find no objective in life but to enjoy it until their last days. As a matter of fact, however, this enjoyment does not give them satisfaction, and this may cause mental anguish and make them re-examine their attitude. Many people are apt to think that the period from birth to death is everything. However, we should consider that our lives are linked with the long history of mankind and all living beings, and that

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these historical events of today are involved in infinite time.

**Q:** Is religious faith necessary?

Faith has various meanings. Faith may be said to exist when one devotes himself to scientific research or to a principle such as communism. If one puts his heart and soul into science, art, some principles, or religion, he must then find that life is worth living.

**ASAHINA (Z):** I don't think life today is ideal, for it requires us to work so unceasingly that we are not allowed to lose even a second. A society in which we can live more leisurely is more desirable. Therefore, the improvement of society has become a problem which must be taken up. Buddhism has a tendency to accept life as it is; but, when there is a need for improvement, reforms must be instituted without hesitation. However, we cannot but doubt whether we would be satisfied with life, even if we made it more comfortable. We must find a consistent meaning in living. Buddhism finds this significance in realizing a world of Buddha.

**NAKAMURA (B):** As for the fact that they have ceased to rely on religion or traditional authority, I think that is because they are out of harmony with the demands of today. The fundamental spirit of traditional teachings is applicable even under modern conditions; but this teaching must be explained in accordance with the new world situation. Moreover, we must consider things from a wider viewpoint than simply our community, prefecture or country.

In analyzing modern conditions, we find that a man works only as a small cogwheel in a larger society. Herein lies the anguish of this age, which in the past has not been treated by religion or philosophy. However, there is a way of thinking which seems to me to solve this question. Although the work which one is now doing may be a very small part of a large project and may seem of very little importance, the influence of the individual is evident at various points. Moreover, however mean the work one may be

doing, what he does not only affects the work of all the others and helps them, but his influence extends even to those outside as well. For example, when one is engaged in an occupation with ten thousand other people, his work is linked with the work of all those people and he is not merely one ten-thousandth of the whole. This recognition should give him joy in his work. This way of thinking is found in the theory of "dependent origination" (*engi* 縁起) which has been one of the fundamental principles of Buddhism from ancient times. This theory is most clearly explained in the *Kegon* 華嚴 doctrine.

**SHIO (J):** In comparison with occidental youth, those of Japan in general can be said to have less religious common sense. The reason for this must lie in the fact that they lack religious education, rather than because religious authority has been destroyed. Those who visit a church or a temple to ask questions can be said to be rather advanced. Most of them do not even know enough to knock at these doors. They are only making fruitless efforts to gain something and are embarrassed with problems. Some suffer from nervous breakdowns which finally result in suicide. I think it is necessary for the priests to come out of their temples and engage in street preaching.

Many suicides are found in Japan among people between the ages of eighteen and thirty, and many of these are really excellent young people. This is a serious problem, indeed. Therefore it is quite natural to raise questions regarding the significance of human life; but before doing this, I want to say that suicide is the gravest violation of the non-killing precept of Buddhism. From the fundamental viewpoint of Buddhism, living is the true value (*sugata* 姿 literally, "form"). In this connection it must be regarded as the gravest sin for mankind to fall into the danger of mass self-destruction by the misuse of atomic power. Atomic power is leading us to the dangerous possibility that all mankind will commit suicide.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** Formerly, government officials, merchants,



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scholars and even soldiers lived a full life in their respective occupations by endeavoring to attain the ideals characteristic of their work. Recently; however, they do not do this. School teachers, for example, were more respected by the children than the prime minister. Parents also taught their children to respect their teachers. Accordingly, although they earned little, teachers lived a full life with pride in their profession and without anxiety. But now they have lost their dignity to the extent that some say publicly that they are employees and the teachers also regard themselves as laborers. No high ideals can be found in them. I think that not only teachers, but also all other classes have lost their ideals.

What I am always thinking is that we should respect the status of certain professions or occupations, which are attained only after much hard labor, and by so doing, we also will be respected. In other words, it is important to recognize mutual personal dignity. It is related that Sākya-muni Buddha (*Shakuson* 釈尊) said as soon as he was born, "In the heavens above and earth beneath, I alone am the honored one" (*Tenjō tenga yuiga dokuson* 天上天下唯我独尊).<sup>\*</sup> This must mean in the modern sense that each one of us should recognize the others' independent position.

The weakest point in today's social thought must be a lack of concern for other people through a misunderstanding of democracy. There are many people who have the illusion that it is democratic to disregard each other rather than to show mutual respect. This idea must be the cause of the present social confusion.

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<sup>\*</sup> According to the *Daihongyō* 大本經 of Jō-agon 長阿含, Sākya-muni raised his hand after taking seven steps and spoke these words.

## II. HAPPINESS

**Main Question:** Religion often seems to teach that suffering is worthwhile. However, we sometimes think that we would be happiest if we could live pleasant lives with plenty of money. What is your opinion?

**KUBOTA (N):** Sākya-muni Buddha taught the five bhikṣu (*biku* 比丘) in his first sermon (*seppō* 説法) in the Deer Park at Sarnāth near Benares, India that they should follow “the middle way” (*chūdō* 中道), rejecting the extremes of epicureanism and asceticism. Happiness and pleasure were not regarded as the same and the practice of asceticism was also denied by the Buddha. Happiness will be found in having it our ideal to become a buddha and making the best of our own situation.

**KARIYA (N):** There is nothing in actual life which can afford us complete satisfaction. Therefore, there seems to be no other way but to recognize the great value of small trifles. Even the most trivial service can alleviate the pain of others and give them joy. Finding the meaning of life in such a manner is the only way to happiness.

**ASAHINA (Z):** An old proverb says, “Upon the full tide of pleasure steals sadness” (*Kanraku kiwamatte aishū ōshi* 欲楽極って哀愁多し).<sup>\*</sup> Even the capacity to pursue pleasure has a limit. Youth may find pleasure in having money and following after women, but men of our age have become aware that this no longer constitutes essential pleasure. Some may be fond of the arts, such as music or painting; but the pleasure which many young men seek seems to be more physical. It is true that physical pleasure is one of the joys of living, and it may be cruel to try to eliminate it. There is no reason, however, why life filled only with worldly pleasure should

<sup>\*</sup> Translation follows Kenkyūsha's “New Japanese-English Dictionary.”

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not sometimes become tiring or even boring. For example, if one takes a certain quantity of food, his stomach is filled. A person should be satisfied, if he gets what he desires, but actually this is only the feeling of one who cannot realize his desire. As long as a desire is not attained, it may remain as an object for which one longs, but once attained a person will be disappointed. After all, as a man is a spiritual being as well as a physical being, the ideal must be for each one to harmoniously adjust himself to both aspects of life, establishing his own ideal (*risō* 理想) firmly and clearly.

**NAKAMURA (B):** Happiness sometimes comes from others, but it should also be found by oneself. There are persons who feel themselves happy in spite of leading humdrum and impecunious lives. However, some people who, although they appear in the eyes of others to lack nothing, are themselves dissatisfied.

Which is preferable, to devote all one's energies for a certain purpose or to live in the enjoyment of an ordinary home life. Formerly, for example, a person who studied so hard that he lost his life, was highly regarded. It is doubtful, however, whether this should merit praise, if it is at the sacrifice of one's family or at another's expense. Formerly, there seem to have been many people who were of the type that worked too hard. Today, however, young men are enjoying themselves while they study, aren't they? When European scholars are compared with American, the former study more diligently than the latter, but among the former some are such abnormal scholars that they are described as supernatural (*shinwateki* 神話的, literally, "mythological") beings. There are no scholars to this type in America. Which is better? Since learning exists for the interest of human beings, it should be carried on in a manner to make others happy.

**SHIIO (J):** I advocate cooperation and communal living (*tomoiki-shugi*, 共生主義)\*. Epicureans seem to lack the idea that they live

\*This expression is unique with Dr. Shiio.



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in a common society. Right faith must aim at extending the individual life into that of the group, denying the individual pursuit of pleasure. The true Buddhist idea is the whole constitutes a large living organism. Therefore, it runs counter to the spirit of Buddhism for individuals to strengthen their ego (*jiko-ishiki* 自己意識, literally, "self-consciousness") or to consider the individual sphere or personal happiness under the private ownership system. Buddhism puts its fundamental faith in the collective world view.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** Even though we say we are living happily, unless we lead good lives, we cannot say that we are happy with others. In Buddhism it is not thought that we may take even a grain of rice or a drop of water for pleasure. For example, when we take a meal, we observe a religious rite, that is, we eat for the purpose of eliminating all evils and observing all that is good, and in order that all living things may equally enter the Buddha Way (*Butsudō* 仏道).

### III. MISFORTUNE

**Main Question:** It is often said that whether one is happy or not depends upon his mental attitude; but as a matter of fact there are cases in which misfortune cannot be eliminated only by a change in mental attitude. Misfortune is said to be the fruit of the seed one sows. Buddhism teaches that there is a natural consequence of one's deeds (*jigō-jitoku* 自業自得), that good causes produce evil effects. However, there are some people who, despite their evil deeds live in prosperity, and others who, even though they work diligently, seem to have bad fortune. How do you explain this?

**KUBOTA (N):** I don't think that (suitable) provision for one's material condition means happiness. I think that a happy condition of mind (*kokoro* 心) is different. As for the natural consequence of one's deeds, that is, the problems of cause and effect (*inga* 因果) or retribution (*ōhō* 応報), I think that some effects of deeds are immediate and others are not felt for hundreds of years. Thus, the curved line of cause and effect is indeed complicated. We should not take a short-sighted view and say that some are unfortunate even though they have done good, while others are prosperous in spite of their evil deeds. Furthermore, we cannot say that one is definitely more fortunate than another. We should proceed straight forward on our own way.

**MASUTANI (J):** Such questions seem to be raised because of a general misunderstanding of karma (*gō* 業) in Buddhism. The proper meaning of karma cannot be grasped by merely considering one's past. Placing karma in the past produces a passive attitude, which results in a theory of predetermination (*yotei-setsu* 予定説). Buddhism by nature is quite different from this. Sākya-muni Buddha regarded karma as the principle which was forming his future. It was before him. In the history of Buddhism, as can be seen in the

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words "accumulated karma" (*shōkugō* 宿業) or "sinful karma" (*zaigō* 罪業), the idea has been expressed that karma is in the past but this is incorrect. To interpret karma in a fantastic way (*shōkumetsu-zōshi* 宿命誌) is not the original Buddhist attitude.

Q: Buddhist often speaks of *in* 因 and *en* 縁. Is it correct to interpret "*in*" as a self-cause and "*en*" as a social cause?

It is incorrect to regard "*in*" and "*en*" as different. The expression in a word means "condition" (*yōin* 条件). However, it is true that there are inner and outer conditions or spiritual and material conditions. Therefore, it is not proper to be satisfied with such an expression as "the three worlds" consisting of body and spirit (*sōgan yori issan* 三因唯一). This idea was common in the original teaching of Buddhism, but it seems to be admitted that Buddhism also has a tendency to materialism.

KARIYA (N): Because one regards himself *in* 因 as being from his own responsibility, a condition is felt. The truth is, however, that I live in others, and in the same time others live in me. When *en* 縁 (*haru* 和) is my condition that *in* 因 (*tsu* 与) is my condition. Therefore, it is wrong to say that one has never accumulated sin and is indulged oneself in one's own happiness. Happiness can never be said to be attained until it is realized in a peaceful world where all the people are united without discrimination.

KANEKO (N): The idea of causality in Buddhism lies in the fact that one reflects in his own way of living and assumes responsibility for it. Therefore one should be glad if a good cause (*in* 因) is made which results in a good effect (*en* 縁) (*haru* 和), but not to seek a good effect by means of a good cause. If one does not understand this principle, he is apt to say, "there is a happy man who has done evil." On the other hand, there is no reason for one to be happy

the world of desire-driven beings the world of beings with karma, and the world of beings without karma.



while he does evil. The sense of happiness is genuine in nature. It is impossible for one to have a sense of happiness while he is living an impure life.

**NISHITANI (P):** The principle of good cause good effect, evil cause evil effect seems to contain a kind of ethical instruction. Buddhism proper takes an attitude which transcends good or bad in an ordinary sense. Therefore, it is possible in some cases to say, that life is good and regardless of whether one falls ill, one can say "it is a good day, everyday" (*Nichi nichi kore Kōnichi* (日々是好日)).\*

**HANAYAMA (JS):** The first problem may lie in the criteria of happiness. The same experience may be regarded as happy by one person and as unhappy by another. After all, this arises out of the difference in mental attitude. For a person who has deeply considered human life, things usually regarded as unfortunate may sometimes be felt to be fortunate. Therefore, it is the mission of religion to open the individual's eyes of the mind (*kokoro* 心) to this way of thinking. As for the problem of causality, in some cases an effect does not come out in one's own lifetime, but in that of his children or their descendants. Therefore, if one has an attitude which considers things from the standpoint of the distant future, he should not be immediately either disappointed or delighted. Anyway, we should be delighted only with having done good; and whether or not it produces a good effect is a secondary consideration.

**Q:** What is the difference between karma and fatalism (*Unmei-setsu* 運命説)?

Fatalism contains the idea that one is born in a predetermined state from which one can never escape. The karma concept, on the contrary, is that one's future is determined only by oneself. The idea that one is controlled willfully by a power other than himself or above himself is counter to the karma concept.

**ASAHINA (Z):** The mental attitude referred to here means the

\* This is a characteristic expression of Zen Buddhism.

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opening of the spiritual eyes; in other words, to find out the significance of one's situation. A janitor with a strong sense of responsibility is sometimes more respected than a president who lacks all sense of responsibility. Then it must be noted also that there are two kinds of karma, that is, personal karma and karma which is held in common with other people. The latter is called "common karma" (*gūgo* 共業). It is not too much to say that the world is woven with a common karma. It is incorrect to consider causality, or good and bad, only from the individual standpoint. For example, the radioactivity covering the earth means a bad common karma for all mankind.

The karma concept in Buddhism seems to be very meaningful in comparison with the Christian idea that everything is attributed to God's will. This is because it admits the possibility of improving human life by means of the human will or effort. However, it is impossible to whiten a man who was born black, or to heighten one who is short by nature. There may be no other solution than to depend upon mental adjustment to the fact that one can be satisfied with being black or short.

**NAKAMURA (B):** There seem to be various causes of misfortune. Some come out of the social system, some from other causes. Those who are enthusiastic in social reformation often think that if social conditions are reformed, everybody will become happy. However, even when a communistic society is realized, conflict between man and man will remain and a man who is ugly or physically handicapped by nature will not be changed. Furthermore, misfortune caused for some spiritual reason can not be cured only by advanced medicine or natural science. This may also require an appropriate mental attitude.

Many people regret that they are unhappy compared with others; but they must know that from some standpoints the difference between happiness and unhappiness is very slight. Someone may

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think that he does no evil (*warui-koto* 悪い事). However, even though Buddhism teaches that no one should kill any living thing, there is no one who can live without violating the non-killing precept. From a viewpoint as extreme as this, the difference between one who has committed no evil and another who has committed some evil will be very slight. If one realizes this, I think he may be able to submit to his own destiny and find new joy in his own situation even though he is living in adverse circumstances.

**SHIO (J):** Misfortune such as poverty or unemployment is attributable to social evils. Buddhism tries to explain these problems by the principle of the natural consequences of one's deed or of retribution, and sometimes teaches resignation (*akirame* 諦らめ). However, this is not the original Buddhist viewpoint. In regard to retribution, cause and effect are apt to be explained on a superficial level and to isolate the individual; but man does not live in such a simple causal relationship and I do not accept such a theory of retribution. It is a product of feudal society. I believe that the abolition of feudalism must be accomplished by destroying the ideas created by it.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** One may fall into a state of contradiction, because he tries to solve all questions on only the level of this life. In the light of Buddhism our life is in constant mutation from life to life, from a beginning to the endless end. The karmas in previous lives are innumerable and they appear in this life in various forms. For example, under the same conditions, one may live to be as old as ninety years, while another may die in the teens. This is because human life develops on the basis of the past karma. For example, take the case of A, who has ten times the capacity of B and is making an effort ten times as hard as B; yet B is rewarded with ten times as much wealth as A. Most people may feel this to be unfair. From the viewpoint of Buddhism, however, it can be said that such people are trying to solve this question only on the

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principles of this present life instead of by that of causality in Buddhism.

Q: I should like to ask for a further explanation about karma.

Karma arises by virtue of our passions (*bonnō* 煩惱). Passions are expressed in a thousand different ways and our deeds, which are the result of passions, are also infinitely various. It is natural then for our lives to have great variety. According to Buddhism, our life is regarded as a result of our own karma; while at the same time the world is formed by virtue of our common karma. Therefore, Buddhism never says that our life is created by God as Christianity does. By the way, Christianity seems to regard all beings except human beings as created for the sake of mankind. This is a grave mistake. In the case of nuclear experiments, for example, they are trying to provide for man's shelter but not for other animals. From the viewpoint of Buddhism, it is wrong to consider the world as existing only for the benefit of human beings. I don't think that people, who believe in religions other than Buddhism, are well aware of this principle of life. Herein lies the weak point of the modern age.



## IV. SOCIAL REFORM

**Main Question :** Since most of the suffering in the world, especially disease and poverty, arises from physical or social causes, it should be possible to eliminate them by improving physical and social conditions. However, I wonder if it is not also possible to solve these problems by means of our mental attitude or religious faith.

**KUBOTA (N):** From the standpoint of Sākyamuni Buddha, it is the normal duty of religion to improve physical conditions, and in this sense, Buddhism is not merely idealism (*yuishin-ron* 唯心論, *kannen-ron* 觀念論, *seishin-shugi* 精神主義). However, Buddhism does not claim that the improvement of external conditions alone is sufficient to produce happiness. According to Buddhism, "the offering of material goods" (*zaise* 財施) and "truth giving" (*hōse* 法施) should go side by side, and an "offering of material goods" without "truth giving" is an evil offering, which sometimes can harm others. For example, it sometimes happens that a person becomes idle when he depends upon outside help, even though he is able to stand upon his own feet. In short, we should hold to the basic principle of living as we ought to live, and at the same time, we should endeavor to improve physical conditions.

**MASUTANI (J):** In Buddhism there is a fable entitled "The Gem" (*Mani-hōju* 摩尼宝珠) which tells of how a beautiful jewel when put in the mud spontaneously cleared everything around it. This means that where ever a superior man lives, the surroundings automatically become pure. In this sense, it is wrong to take a merely passive attitude and say that because the environment is muddy, nothing can be done. The problem is, which is more important, the social structure or the individual. We exist both as individuals and as

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social beings and these two cannot be regarded as separate. Therefore, we should make a better world by means of improving both the inner life and society.

**KARIYA (N):** In Buddhism, a four-fold way of living is taught. That is to say, all property is divided into four parts, one quarter each being allocated to (1) capital for one's trade, (2) family living costs, (3) gifts for the poor, and (4) aid for relatives. If the spirit of this "fourfold division" (*Shibunhō* 四分法) prevailed in society, a life of mutual aid and sharing would be realized and people would be able to enjoy a rich life in which there would be mutual compensation between the "haves" and "have-nots", while if they do otherwise, they will lead a poor life. I think that to create such a world should be our true social purpose.

**Q:** I have often been told that an ideal world where people mutually aid each other and share their happiness cannot be attained within the framework of capitalism in which people are trying to monopolize profits. Therefore, powerful measures are required to counteract it and it is ineffective for religion to teach such an ideal (*risō* 理想) in a merely spiritual way.

I think people in a capitalistic society should recognize clearly the fact that we are living in a mutually inter-related society. For example, no commercial enterprise can be carried on without employees. This is a matter of faith rather than of social policy. I think that a peaceful society could be realized by adhering to the faith that we are living mutually interdependent lives (*issai to tomo ni ikite iru* 一切と共に生きている).

**Q:** To speak concretely, what form of social structure is ideal?

There are, at present, two types of social structure, capitalism and socialism or communism. In my opinion, the ideal would be realized if the two would make mutual concessions. What I want to emphasize is the fact that it is not only man who is living in this world. It is true that today's culture is that of human beings.

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However, we, human beings must know that we are living not only with other animals but also with plants, and are doing so by their favor. Furthermore, the plants are existing not only for the sake of human beings, but they have their own *raison d'être* (*dokuritsu shita sonzai-igi* 独立した存在意義). Herein lies one of the meanings of "plants attaining Buddhahood" (*sōmoku jōbutsu* 草木成仏). In conclusion, in my opinion, each one should be independent. Instead of being mere tools or means for the use others, men should be in a relationship in which they employ and are employed by one another. I think this is the true type of cultural society. The sacred formula "Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō" which Saint Nichiren emphasized, is manifesting his earnest vow to establish such an ideal society.

**KANEKO (JS):** Such things as poverty and disease could not be truly remedied, if it were not for social welfare facilities. What I want to say, however, is that suffering from disease or anything else can afford an opportunity for man to consider the fundamental aspect of human life. It is religion that makes us pay attention to this. For example, someone may ask to what extent can the *nenbutsu* (念仏) be helpful in eliminating poverty or disease. But the true meaning of the *nenbutsu* does not lie there. It means that a man becomes aware of his finiteness and longs for infinitude. Conversely speaking, he becomes satisfied with finiteness through longing for infinitude. Religion should aim at clarifying the true human way or what a man should be; and rather than eliminating suffering religion should recognize that there is some meaning even in suffering.

**Q:** Recently there was much discussion when the president of a silk-thread company forced the women laborers to offer *nenbutsu* in thankfulness for gifts from the employer, instead of complaining about low wages. What is your opinion of this?

It is, indeed, a public problem. It may be all right, however, if

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they are content with the low pay and are working willingly under the influence of a strong Shin faith (*Shinshū no shinjin* 真宗の信心).

Q: Some seem to criticize the fact that the capitalist or the employer utilizes religion for the purpose of suppressing complaints, while he is monopolizing the effort of the employees.

This seems to follow an old pattern. However, even when a religion is utilized, if the listeners are pleased to hear it, they may become happy by means of it. The utilizer of the religion is at fault, but not the religion itself.

Q: It is also said that religion would lose its *raison d'être* under a system of social security in which no social inequality existed and in which people could enjoy an easy life even in illness or old age.

One cannot always paint well, even if he has plenty of instruments for painting. Likewise, it is doubtful whether one can paint a picture of happiness on the canvas of human life, however much material for happiness may be provided. There is a strong tendency nowadays to count only material or mechanical things as the conditions of happiness. When people become satisfied with certain conditions, however, some other discontent will arise. People are apt to think that if material worries are removed from their lives, spiritual sufferings will also be eliminated. However, if one no longer had to worry about daily living, he would then think about some love-affair or struggle for power. Thus, spiritual suffering never ceases to exist; so I think, religion will never become unnecessary.

NISHITANI (P): It is true and also important that disease and poverty will decrease with economic and political improvement. However, even if such anxieties cease altogether, this does not necessarily mean the eradication of all human suffering. For example, death is inescapable. Death is certain. It may come tomorrow. This fact makes us think fundamentally about human existence,



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and at the very moment of thinking about it, suffering may be overcome. Furthermore, human relations, such as those between man and woman, husband and wife, parent and child are very complicated and the sufferings which arise from them will not be easily eliminated merely by the improvement of the social structure.

It goes without saying that the problem of eliminating poverty belongs to the sphere of economics and politics and the improvement of the social structure must be so considered; but it is a mistake for religious leaders who are ignorant of political or economic affairs to interfere in these matters. Nevertheless, it is very important for politicians and economists to have a religious consciousness. In America and the Soviet Union today, people have become mere parts of a machine and the dark shadows of inhumanity prevail there. If religion held an important position in these countries, such an inhuman society would not have appeared.

Q: Can a man say such a thing as "it is a good day, everyday" (*nichinichi kore kēnichi* 日々是好日) when he is leading a hand to mouth existence?

I think that fundamentally there is a standpoint from which one can say "it is a good day, everyday," even though he and his family are actually starving. The simple suggestion of this may be harmful, just as giving a little child indigestible food is harmful, but when the child grows strong, he will be able to understand the true meaning even in a state of starvation or disease. I think that there should be such a standpoint in religion.

HANAYAMA (JS): When one is in distress financially, however earnestly he may devote himself to religion, his economic condition will not be improved. Likewise, illness will never be healed only by religion. However, after dealing with these matters economically and medically, there may still remain unsolved problems. These unsolved problems should be taken up by religious leaders, but religion should not assume responsibility for all sorts of miscellane-

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ous matters. It is a profanation of religion to teach that any illness can be cured or much money gained through religious faith.

Q: I have often heard that religion would be unnecessary if social conditions were improved and social security established.

Religion will never become unnecessary. It will always be absolutely necessary. Religion will never cease to exist so long as man is mortal. Moreover, however much physical problems may be solved, spiritual suffering will still remain. Salvation from such suffering can only come through religion.

ASAHI (Z): It is an extremely mechanical notion that if the material condition of people's livelihood is equal, all people will live on a basis of equality and misfortunes will be removed. Human existence is not of such a nature that when the outward conditions are satisfactory, everything is solved. Moreover, if the acquisition of material (*busshitsu-teki kakutoku* 物質の獲得) and social reform are based on "ownership and profit" (*ushotoku* 有所得), no true happiness can be attained. Without the attitude of "non-ownership and non-profit" (*mushotoku* 無所得), a happy society cannot be realized. Next comes the problem of religion's weakness. There is a story about Yoshitsune (younger brother of Yoritomo Minamoto, the founder of the Kamakura Shogunate) and Benkei (Yoshitsune's loyal retainer) each making starch of boiled rice. Benkei put all his rice in a mortar at once and tried to mash it, but he only succeeded in making poor starch. Yoshitsune, on the other hand, mashed his rice grain by grain, and when he finished, he had perfect and strong starch. It may be said that Yoshitsune's way is the way of religious leaders, while Benkei's is that of social reformers. Religion should aim at converting individuals one by one to the true way and thus establish a true society.

However, it does not seem to be a good thing for religion to stand aloof from social, political or economic problems. Buddhism, for example, teaches benevolence and Christianity love; and it is apt

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to be thought that benevolence or love is practiced when a rich man bestows favors on the poor. However, fundamentally speaking, the very existence of the poor who need relief is contrary to the spirit of humanity and equality. In other words, unless the social structure itself is improved, it can not be said that either benevolence or love is practised. The mere practice of benevolence, without improving political and economic conditions in which people need relief, is like giving a remedy to a man who has taken poison and not preventing him from doing so again. This attitude of religious leaders is not proper. Present day, religious leaders who think that they have done a good thing merely by bestowing surplus materials on the poor, can be said to be degenerate and in a sense very idle. In this regard, I agree with the view that teaching only individual salvation is useless.

The same can be said about international affairs. Instead of a rich country being satisfied with bestowing surplus materials on a poor country, world equality should be realized so that such things are unnecessary. In this sense, I am supporting the idea of a world federation.

**NAKAMURA (B):** What must be considered first of all is that we should not mix up things of different dimensions. If one is in distress, he should first of all try to find his way out of the difficulty. For this purpose there may be various ways such as, for example, working to increase his income, asking for another's help, or trying to improve the social situation. If religious leaders teach that one can be content in his mind, they are mixing up things of different dimensions. At the same time, there seems to be an error in the thinking of social reformers. This may be understood from the fact that many people fled to the free countries from beyond the iron curtain, because, in spite of the social reformation, social conditions had not been completely reformed.

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**Q:** It has often been said recently that suffering and evil are not personal but social problems; that is, there is social suffering or social evil which can be eliminated by means of the improvement of society.

It is true that there are some evils which can be removed by social reformation, but, on the other hand, there may be also evils which can not be so removed. Concerning inequality, for example, it can be said that in a sense the difference in social standing is greater in the Soviet Union where the social reformation has taken place than in Japan. This accounts for the fact that they are not aware that there is fundamental evil in human beings, although they advocate equality. Furthermore, it has often been made evident that struggles take place very easily among people of the same rank. A friend of yesterday may be put to death tomorrow. This is also because they have not dealt with the fundamental evil innate in human nature.

**SHIO (J):** It is the mission of religion to improve the social structure and to raise the standard of living. Generally speaking, as the social life is rationalized, belief in God or Buddha seems to diminish. This is because the way of taking hold of faith has been wrong. On the other hand, the separation of government from religion is evidence that politics is inferior. At present, the Socialists and Communists are crying for social security, but they are only demanding the highest possible wages for the least amount of labor. This being the case, it is feared that human capacity may be diminished. The state of Japan before the end of World War II was such that, although the rich could lead luxurious lives attended by many physicians and nurses while the common people could neither afford medicine nor have adequate facilities, some people boasted that Japan's fundamental character was unsurpassed and that sacrifice for the sake of the Emperor was a noble deed. This was far from admirable. Japan does not have the right basis for



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political power. This is because it has no religious ideals.

**Q:** Do you think that it is possible to realize social reform by means of a religious spirit?

The term religion is apt to remind us of something strange. This may be attributable to religion itself, which has created specific doctrines and rituals. On this account, the world which religion aims at as the ideal is not being realized. On the contrary, it is being brought about by those who deny religion. For example, the Soviet Union has often been said to be a country of dictators or a despotic government; but the people are endeavoring to work together and to enrich their lives in collective cooperation. Therefore, if the strictness is relaxed little by little, it may be said that they are approaching heaven sooner than has been possible by any religion of the past. On the other hand, capitalism can never escape social inequality.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** I agree with the view that responsibility for human misfortune is, in many cases, attributable to society. All people who are constituents of society are jointly making it good or bad. This world is a place of "common karma" (gūgō 共業) and being related to this world of a common karma, all of us are responsible. It is Buddhist teaching that all of us should be awakened and make a joint effort to improve this world.

**Q:** Some social reformers seem to take a negative attitude toward religion and to regard material improvement as a primary measure.

Since social reformers hold a materialistic conception of history, they interpret all human life as matter and deny the independence of spirit. I think there is some truth in this as a philosophy, but I am afraid it may produce a deadlock as a way of life. For example, however delicious a dish may be, if it is thrown at a person, saying, "Come on and eat," as if it were being given to a dog, can

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he eat it with delight? But no matter how coarse the food may be, if it is served with real kindness, saying "Please help yourself," he may be very grateful for it. This may account for the fact that materialism alone is not right or satisfying for us.

## V. HEALTH AND FAITH

**Main Question:** When one falls ill, some religious leaders advise him to get religious faith and pray for his recovery. How effective is faith and prayer for healing?

**KUBOTA (N):** A bodily disease cannot be cured in any other way than by medical treatment. Because of his mental attitude, however, a person may fall into a miserable spiritual condition or disease and due to carelessness he may become worse. This condition can only be cured by means of religion.

According to Chapter 3 of the Lotus Sūtra (*Hoke Kyō* 法華經), this sūtra is the best medicine for curing all the diseases of the people in the world. This must refer to diseases of the passions (*bonnō* 煩惱) or disease of the mind (*kokoro* 心). Prayer is effective for mental diseases. The prayer-priest (*kitō-sō* 祈禱僧) of former days seem to have had some knowledge of these matters, for it was said that they should not deal with other than mental diseases. Therefore, it is incorrect to say, as some priests do, that all kinds of disease can be cured by religion. Moreover, according to the same passage of the Lotus Sūtra, one may become eternally young and immortal after recovering from disease. This does not mean that one does not grow old or die but that one becomes free from the fear or sorrow of growing old.

**MASUTANI (J):** Many people, who say without hesitation that religion is capable of curing disease, base their position on idealism (*yuishin-ron* 唯心論). This is not Buddhism. The fundamental attitude of Buddhism is one of adjustment to existing conditions. In Buddhism there is an expression "disorder of the four elements" (*shidai fuchō* 四大不調) which means that disease comes from the disorder of earth, water, fire and air. In this way, Buddhism takes various conditions into consideration and does not concern itself with only the mental condition. The fundamental standpoint of Buddhism

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lies in considering in detail how many other conditions there are besides mind.

For myself, I can only say that I do not know about the effect of prayer on disease; but I think there is some meaning in the prayers which the Shingon Sect or others practice. Prayer of this sort can shake out and awaken what lies deep in human consciousness.

**KARIYA (N):** According to the Lotus Sūtra, there are two kind of disease, physical and mental. I often say, therefore, that when a man becomes ill, let both a physician and a priest know about it. In regard to the problem of prayer, even when a disease itself is cured, there may be some cases in which it is not considered completely cured from the viewpoint of religion. Prayer may also be necessary. However, when we say this, it is often understood in the sense of a third party offering a prayer for someone. This is not what is meant. A prayer must be one's own strong power and great hope.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** A percentage of the people, who believe in the so-called new religions, seem to think that they have been cured by faith, but there also may be many persons, who have renounced their faith because they were not cured by religion. In regard to the problem of disease and religion, a human being is composed of spirit and body. Buddhism interpretes this to mean that a human being consists of the five elements, that is, "form (*shiki* 色), sensation (*ju* 受), perception (*sō* 想), action (*gyō* 行), and consciousness (*shiki* 識). Medical treatment of the body is necessarily connected with the problem of the spirit (*seishin* 精神). This accounts for the fact that mental healing or mental pathology have recently been much discussed in modern medical science. Accordingly, it is possible that the power of a conviction, that a certain faith can heal a disease, may be effective. However, there seems to be a difference between the two attitudes. One is to find a direct connection



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between disease and faith, and the other is to find an indirect connection between them.

**ASAHINA (Z):** I think disease and faith have a close connection. If one has a belief in Christianity or Other Power Pure Land Buddhism, for example, it must be very helpful for the patient. The same thing can be said in Zen Buddhism. In this faith means to become unpossessed (*mushotoku* 無所得) or unattached (*mushūjaku* 無執着) If a patient's mental condition is purified to this extent, miracles sometimes happen. When one has attained to the mental stage that he does not mind whenever he dies, he sometimes becomes free from disease.

**NAKAMURA (B):** I think that the problem of faith and disease must be dealt with separately. It may be possible that a mental disease is cured by faith. Nevertheless, the two things must be separated because they are of different dimensions. There were many people in the olden days who believed that a disease was cured by prayer. However, modern people trust a skillful physician and the newest medicine more than prayer. It may be said that this is another type of superstition.

**Q:** If prayer for divine favor for some material benefit is denied, does this mean that praying itself is disapproved? Or is there an other kind of true prayer?

A prayer should be offered for the purpose of heightening and purifying oneself and there should be no question about its effect. If one prays for some material effect, it may be superstition. Prayer must be interpreted in a spiritual sense. Sometimes prayer may bring about a change in material conditions, but this is not a matter of the first importance.

**SHIIO (J):** I think it is a fact that disease can be cured by faith. Even miracles can be affirmed in some cases. Faith is a kind of skillful spiritual cure. What is called a miracle is sometimes the effect of such treatment. However, to my surprise something akin

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to superstition is found in the field of medical science. A physician, in the case of an eye disease, for example, sometimes makes an examination and treatment of the eyes only. This is not a really effective type of medical treatment. I think that over-all and all-inclusive forms of treatment must be devised. It is natural that among these the problems of the mind and livelihood of a patient must be included.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** Life (*seimei* 生命) is very much affected by spirit (*seishin* 精神). Therefore, if one prays to the Goddess of Mercy (*Kannon-sama* 観音さま, *Avalokiteśvara*, Skt.), for example, with a firm conviction that she will cure his disease without fail, and at the same time receives medical treatment, his disease will be healed soon. On the other hand, if one worries too much about death, he often dies soon. This must be beyond the sphere with which physicians can deal. To my mind what is disease and what is life is not thoroughly understood by physicians. That a disease is cured sooner than anticipated by means of spiritual influences, which arise from a conviction that the disease will surely be cured by prayer, may be explained to a certain degree from the psychological standpoint. By the way, according to the doctrine of Esoteric Buddhism, the harmonization of the three powers, or the power of one's own effort (*jibun no kudoku-riki* 自分の功德力), the power of Buddha's aid (*kaji-riki* 加持力) and the power of nature (*hokkai jinen no chikara* 法界自然の力), makes prayer (*kitō* 祈禱) effective.

**Q:** Some newly established religions seems to forbid the believers to consult a physician,

That is a bogus religion. Such a thing is not taught in Buddhism. Sākya-muni Buddha himself encouraged medicine.

## VI. PROBLEM OF SIN

**Main Question** · I don't understand the teaching that disease is a result of sinful acts, which must be purified (*kiyomeru* 浄める) by faith. Sometimes, the word “*gōbyō* (業病 malady caused by one's karma)” is heard. Please explain this.

**KUBOTA (N)**: Before medical science developed, a disease like leprosy was regarded as a malady caused by one's karma. For example, the Lotus Sūtra tells of one who suffered from leprosy as punishment for speaking ill (*hibō* 誹謗) of the True Law (*Shōbō* 正法). Therefore, lepers used to gather at temples of the Nichiren Sect in order to be purified of their sin (*tsumi* 罪) by becoming converts to the True Law, the Lotus Sūtra. This is not correct from a scientific point of view, but it can be said to be a social truth. Therefore, I think this is a problem which should be clarified from this point of view.

**MASUTANI (J)**: I don't think Buddhism takes the position that disease is the result of sin (*tsumi* 罪). Primitive Buddhism at least has nothing to say about it. What it teaches us is not sin, but dissatisfaction regarding the sufferings and limitation (*yūgen-sei* 有限性) of human beings.

**Q**: Doesn't your view that Buddhism has no sense of sin, mean that Buddhism is lacking in its religious nature?

Where Christianity speaks of sin, the Greeks speak of evil (*aku* 悪) and people of India of suffering. That little sense of sin shows the lack of a religious nature is a Christian position. The sense of sin can only arise on the assumption that the sinner should be punished. Primitive Buddhism sometimes teaches about sin; but it means a violation of the precepts (*kairitsu* 戒律). In later Buddhism, a notable view of sin appears and Pure Land Buddhism especially stressed the “grave sins accumulated in the past” (*zaiaku junjū* 罪惡深重), but it differed greatly from the implications of the

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sense of sin in Christianity. Anyway, the idea that the lack of a sense of sin indicates shallowness in a religion, is the same as saying that the value of a religion is not recognized because its construction is different.

**KARIYA (N):** The Lotus Sūtra says that believers are blessed and those who speak ill of it must be charged with sin. It is very unreasonable, however, to say that a man suffers from a disease because of sinful acts, even though he has never been given a chance to hear the Lotus Sūtra.

**Q:** What is the reason for saying that slandering the Lotus Sūtra is a sin?

The Lotus Sūtra teaches that we are mutually interdependent (*issai to tomo ni ikite iru* 一切と共に生きている). Therefore, slandering (*soshiru* 誘る) the Sūtra means that any one who thinks that he is living without relations to others is ignoring this fact. This is an illusion fundamental to all human beings. The sūtras (*kyōten* 經典) teach the eternity of the Buddha-nature (*busshō* 仏性). According to the Lotus Sūtra, the Buddha-nature is comparable to a paddy-field in which "the seed of Buddha" (*busshu* 仏種) must be sown. The seed of Buddha is nothing but the fact that one is living. It is a fact that I am living mutually interdependent with everyone. It is a sin to be unaware of this fact, though we are living in it.

**KANEKO (JS):** The "reason" (*dōri* 道理) in the Orient is "*iware*" in Japanese. This means that things differ according to time and place; that is, (though the matter itself is the same) in one case "this" or "that" may be said (*iwareru koto*) and in another case, it may not be said (*iware-nai koto*). From a reasonable point of view, there are times when we can safely say some things to a strong or healthy man, which cannot always be safely said to a weak or diseased man. Therefore, if we say to a person who is ill that his suffering is (the result of) sinful karma (*zaigō* 罪業) or

that his disease is caused by karma (*gōbyō* 業病), we are unreasonable.

Q: It seems to be often taught that some diseases and misfortunes are a retribution for sins committed in a previous life. What is your opinion?

If one really understands the true meaning of accumulated karma in previous lives (*shukuse no gō* 宿世の業) which have resulted in the present situation, his sense will transcend the accumulated karma. About the question of whether or not there is a previous life, it must be frankly admitted that this is not known. As for me, it seems that it must be necessary for us to project a fundamental stage (*basho* 場所) in which human life (*ningen no shōgai* 人間の生涯) should be placed. For this stage, a previous and a future life are required. In other words, as a place for reflection on the actual life (*genjitsu no seikatsu* 現実の生活), a previous world (*zense* 前世) is required, and as a place for hope (*kibō* 希望), a future life (*raise* 来世) is necessary.

Q: Pure Land Buddhism seems to stress "grave sins accumulated in the past" (*zaiaku jinjū* 罪惡深重). In this regard, it is impressive that this teaches that the fundamental sin is that of being born as a man, rather than saying that sin is that which is produced by evil conduct.

Just as there are two kinds of human afflictions (*nayami* 悩み) that is, the mental struggles which human beings experience and the agony of being a human being, so there are also two kinds of sin (*zaiaku* 罪惡); that is, sin committed by man and that of being born as a human being. Regarding the latter, this appears to refer to the "grave sins accumulated in the past." The former is consciously committed sin, while the latter is committed unconsciously. The latter may be said to be the graver. The sin of being a human being is shown, for example, in the case of a man who must live by means of killing others or of doing unreasonable things to others.



This type of sin cannot be eliminated by improving society. Conversely speaking, when these sins are eliminated, the human world will cease to exist. A man exists in the very place where he must afflict himself and cannot but commit sin. Furthermore, he cannot be at peace (*yasunjite iru* 安んじている) in it. Religion must play the role of solving such a conflict. Seeking only divine favor is often seen in newly established religions, but this is not true faith.

**NISHITANI (P):** That a man becomes diseased as a result of sins of the past world (*zense* 前世) cannot be accepted by moderns; but further consideration of an old saying of Buddhism that cause and effect revolve makes us understand this to be a reasonable warning. For example, present disease has an endless link of causality (*inga* 因果). The causality spoken of here is not the mechanical and material power referred to in natural science, but is the causality always involving one's self. Moreover, one is always connected with the life of all the world. From such a viewpoint, I find that the cause and effect from the previous life would have a fundamentally grave significance.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** Formerly sin used to be thought of in a moral sense as badness in contrast to goodness, but this sense was gradually deepened by religious elements and now it is believed to transcend the mere idea of good and bad. Originally speaking, Buddhism believes that the actual world filled with the sufferings of birth, age, disease, and death developed through action (*gyō* 行) due to ignorance (*mumyō* 無明). Ignorance means having no clear wisdom regarding truth. Such ignorance differs from the idea of original sin (*genzai* 原罪) taught in Christianity. It is more inward in nature than ordinary evil, which is the fundamental cause for forming the polluted (*kegareta* 汚れた) human life. Therefore, Buddhism can be said to include something more than the view of sin in the sense in which it is ordinarily used.

**ASAHINA (Z):** Japanese Buddhism sometimes contains something

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which cannot be understood and things which we would like to eliminate. The view that disease is the result of past evil conduct (*gōbyō* 業病) is one example. It may be admissible to say, when one commits something wrong, that it is his karma; but if a person falls ill when he is laboring in a group under unhealthy conditions, he must not be made responsible for everything. As a result of the bad conduct of some people, an hereditary disease exists among mankind, and their descendants suffer from it. This may be said to be the result of karma, but this is the collective karma of all mankind or of society as a whole and not solely the karma of the one who becomes ill. In other words, karma should be regarded from a social standpoint.

Q: Is there any great difference between the view of sin in Christianity and that of Buddhism?

You say Buddhism, but there is a great difference between the teachings of the Other Power (*tariki* 他力) Buddhism and Zen Buddhism. Zen Buddhism does not advocate anything like the original sin taught in Christianity. All human beings have the Buddha-nature (*busshō* 仏性). Hence, sin and karma boil down to "unpossessed" (*mushotoku* 無所得). Repentance (*sange* 懺悔) for sin taught in Zen Buddhism differs from repentance in which one prays for forgiveness standing before gods or Buddhas. It is the repentance taught in a sūtra (*Kan Fugen Kyō* 観普賢經) which says that "if one desires to repent, sit rigidly (*tanza* 端坐) and think over the real aspect (*jissō* 実相)." It teaches that "if one repents, sins go away like the dew or frost in the light face of the sun."

NAKAMURA (B): Ancient Buddhist books generally taught that evil (*aku* 悪) was a personal matter and this may have been all right when a man could live independently. But after society advanced, a man was criticized when he entered a mountain alone to live a life of meditation. Anyhow, at the time when the solitary

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life was praised, the problems of evil and sin may have been solved easily as personal matters: but in the close and complicated human relations of today, evil and sin must be considered from the social viewpoint.

**Q:** Is there any difference between the view of man's "grave sins accumulated in the past" (*zaiaku jinjū* 罪惡深重) in Pure Land Buddhism and the view of the original sin in Christianity?

In the case of Christianity, a man sins in relation to God, but in the case of Buddhism, he sins towards his fellowmen or all living beings. If Christianity still has the doctrine that God created Adam and Eve and that the sin committed by them has been transmitted to all posterity, it differs fundamentally from the sin-view of Buddhism. However, I don't think that such a myth holds any meaning today. Christians may explain it as a parable but as for me I hold the view of Pure Land Buddhism that human beings are by nature sinful.

**SHIHO (J):** I believe the view that disease is punishment by an ancestor is a superstition and an idea which did not originally exist in Buddhism. Such a thing should not be advocated by religions of high standards. The idea of karma in the previous life is apt to be understood as meaning that a man has individuality like a soul, which continues to exist; but to tell the truth, man's karma is being molded not only by himself but also by all his family and others. In other words, there is a collective karma (*gūgō* 共業). In this sense, it is wrong to say that a certain disease is the result of sinful acts (*zaigō* 罪業) of the individual. However, it may be an idea by which a sense of personal responsibility may be heightened.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** Originally speaking, sinfulness and blessedness "have no lord," that is, no substance (*zaifuku mushu* 罪福無主). This being the case, I do not think there is either evil or sin. This is the non-duality of good and evil (*zen'aku funi* 善惡不二).

The actual world, however, is the result of the previous world (*mae no yo* 前の世). This is a natural fact from the viewpoint of causality in Buddhism. Therefore, as a result of one's past conduct, one is born as a child of certain parents and, if the parents have a certain malady, he may be born blind or deaf. Such can only be said to be so in the case of a disease which is the result of previous karma (*gōbyō* 業病). The words, "previous karma (*shukugō* 宿業) or "a disease caused by it," (*gōbyō* 業病) often impress us as fatalism (*shukumei-ron* 宿命論). The causality (*inga-ron* 因果論) advocated by Buddhism, however, means that as the present condition is the result of the past, one should improve himself so as to create a good future. Thus, it is different from mere fatalism.

## VII. DEATH

**Main Question:** According to a person who was told that he had an incurable disease, the thing that disturbed him most was his fear of waiting for death. He sometimes thought that he would prefer to commit suicide rather than die naturally. If such a person could learn that there is a world after death where his soul (*reikon* 霊魂) can enjoy eternal life, he would be in a peaceful state of mind. However, I cannot but think that this is only a fairy tale. What is your opinion?

**KUBOTA (N):** Buddhism teaches that life should be valued to the last moment. Buddhists often refer to a poem which says that even a woman diver goes to the beach wearing a straw raincoat to avoid getting wet in a shower. One should make every possible effort to live to the last moment and endeavor to train oneself in order to be able to die smiling. This is one of the effects of the Buddhist faith. The death of the body is inevitable, but this does not mean the end of life. Last fall, I myself took serious ill and I thought I was about to die. I remember then that I was delighted to think that I could meet my deceased older friends in the Paradise of the Vulture Peak (*Ryōzen Jōdo* 靈山淨土).

**Q:** I have heard that Sākya-muni Buddha did not teach that despite the mortality of the body the soul itself is immortal. If so, from Sākya-muni's standpoint, what happens after death? Why are memorial services for the souls of ancestors observed in Japanese Buddhism? Don't these run counter to Sākya-muni's position?

Sākya-muni Buddha denied the existence of the soul viewed from the standpoint of so-called naive realism; but he taught that the results of our conduct are never extinguished. In other words, he stressed the immortality of karma. According to the chapter on the Infinite Life of Tathāgata (*Nyorai Juryō Hon* 如来寿量品)\* in

\* Lotus Sūtra, chapter 16



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the Lotus Sūtra, Sākya-muni Buddha teaches that he is always in this world teaching the Law (*Hō* 法). This infinite life (*eien-sei* 永遠性) of Sākya-muni Buddha does not mean the immortality of the soul (*reikon* 靈魂), but that the result of his past good karma (*zen-gō* 善業) lives eternally.

**MATSUTANI (J):** I once heard of a person who, when told that he had cancer, confessed that he could not sink to the state of consoling himself by the idea that he would be reborn in Heaven. He said that he would rely solely upon his sincerity (*shisei* 至誠). I think that such a way of thinking is Buddhistic. Now, about the problem of the soul, (*reikon* 靈魂), the reason why Sākya-muni denied the soul lies in his idea of dependent origination (*engi* 緣起). This is a fundamental idea of Buddhism. Therefore, to set up a fixed and unchangeable ego or soul is in conflict with its true teachings. Some persons may say that this will produce nihilism (*kyomu-shisō* 虛無思想) or the idea that nothing is left after death. Sākya-muni, however, also denied nihilism. He taught dependence upon the Middle Way (*Chū-dō* 中道). This is very difficult for the masses to understand. Hence, later Buddhism adopted the theory and practice of belief in souls. I think that Buddhism has considerable latitude in the concept of soul. When the position of Buddhism is thoroughly examined, however, the idea of a fixed soul must be denied, and in its place must be put the idea of karma (*gō* 業) or *saṃtāna*, that is, continuation.

**Q:** Then, how should we explain the memorial services for ancestors (*senzo hōyō* 先祖法要)?

Religious services for ancestors based on the supposition that the soul exists is a little out of line from the standpoint of Buddhism. It must be our natural feeling, however, to call our ancestors to mind, because we have inherited their karma.

**Q:** In case the karma continues even after death, does something like one's self go with it?

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As Sākya-muni taught selflessness (*muga* 無我), despite the idea that the karma continues, the continued existence of a fixed self must be denied.

Q: When the existence of self is denied, if continuance of the karma is admitted, then isn't the karma after all something like nothing?

Such a contradiction arises because, in holding to the idea of a fixed self, the old view of the soul cannot be given up. Anyhow, I think that the Buddhist position is that, since we have received human life, which it is very precious and rare for us to enjoy, we should live it to the full; and we should at least hold the view that the great event for us is this life.

KARIYA (N): The word "soul" makes us wonder whether or not something objective exists. However, I should like to suggest that we look at the fact that we are actually living. We are living an endless life from the three worlds to the three worlds (*sanze sanze* 三世三世: past, present, future in a recurring cycle). If we don't believe this, we cannot believe that we are actually alive.

Q: If this is so, then how about death?

What proves immortality (*fumetsu* 不滅) is mortality (*metsu* 滅). The chapter on the infinite life of Tathāgata in the Lotus Sūtra testifies to the unchangeable by means of the changeable. It does so in the fact that we live eternally by means of two things, life and death (*shōji* 生死).

Q: How about the problem of the soul?

Mortality or immortality does not concern the problem of the soul. If there were an object called "soul," which enters into or comes out of our mind (*kokoro* 心), a human being would be something like a machine. This is not the case. To be alive is the fact of death. Life and death are always one.

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**KANEKO (JS):** Buddhism teaches the transcendence of life and death.

Therefore, it is not possible to take up the question of whether or not there is something left after death. If the world, which transcends life and death, is called the eternal world, this would be a purely spiritual world (*junsui-seishin no sekai* 純粹精神の世界) in which it would be wrong to think of either a previous or a future life.

**Q:** Does pure spirit (*junsui-seishin* 純粹精神) differ from the soul (*reikon* 靈魂)?

Yes, it does. There may be another way of expressing it. Suppose one gets happiness through faith, this (feeling) is eternal (*eien fumetsu* 永遠不滅).

**Q:** How about the continuation of oneself?

I think it is possible to think of my parents as my previous life and my grandparents as my life before that. In this sense, I myself can be said to have continued from the very day when history began. On the other hand, this must be considered from the social point of view, that is, I exist in relationship with others.

**NISHITANI (P):** Buddhism sets up "consciousness" (*shiki* 識) in place of the soul (*reikon* 靈魂). Mahā-yāna Buddhism stresses the "store" (*ālaya*) consciousness, which in the last analysis is a kind of idea of the soul, which is generally held in the occident. When the word "soul" is tentatively used, it is the soul common to all things. Furthermore, consciousness is the foundation of all things which concern the soul (*reikon no taishō* 靈魂の対象).

The problem of the immortality of the soul is so complicated that, according to one way of thinking, Sākya-muni cannot necessarily be said to have denied it. However, the ordinary idea of the soul as something like a ghost, which appears after one's death, naturally should cease to exist; and the notion of a soul with human functions such as seeing, hearing, and thinking should be

dropped. In this sense, Buddhism may be said to deny the immortality of the soul. However, if we say that the truth which Buddhism teaches is the ultimate of individual self-consciousness and that this is what is meant by the "soul," then it may be permissible to speak of such a thing as being immortal.

**Q:** Buddhism often teaches the continuation of karma (*gō no sonzoku* 業の存続). Despite this, if self-consciousness does not continue, isn't this something like saying that the condition after one's death is nothingness (*mu* 無)?

The problem may lie in what is regarded as self-consciousness. We ordinarily regard something about self as constituting self-consciousness, and so, when this is lost, extremely speaking, we feel that we become like plants or lifeless things.

In such a case, the self seems to be thought of as something substantial (*jittai-teki* 実体的) or solid; but this idea is called ego (*ga* 我) in Buddhism, and is regarded as an illusion and not the true self. This ego should be eliminated. The true self taught in Buddhism must be a self with a broad and large "center" (*shin* 心, literally, "mind" or "heart"), which is grasped from the standpoint of voidness (*kū* 空), that is, self-awakening (*jikaku* 自覚). This is in its extreme form the immediate self-awakening which Zen Buddhism stresses, but which is also found in the sincere faith advocated by Shin sects.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** We cannot say whether there is or is not a world (*sekai* 世界) after death. To a man who thinks that there is, it exists; while it does not exist to a man who does not think so. Anyway, as it is an existence beyond our experience, there is no other way but to have faith. If possible, I try not to use the word "soul." I don't think such a thing exists. Sākya-muni himself did not say anything about it, and Buddhism has had no such idea from the beginning. The idea that something like a will-o'-the-wisp flies lightly away from a body is likely to be very popular,

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but Buddhism never taught such a thing. Buddhism stresses karma instead of the soul. To tell the truth, this is only a way of interpretation. Therefore we must not think that such a thing exists or remains objective. Anyway, it cannot definitely be said that the world after death either exists or does not exist. Actually, nothing exists but each passing moment and we can only say that the past and the future are continuations of the present. Hence, the idea that there was a past, that this is the present, and that there is a future, is drawing a curtain on the stream of time and is not a Buddhistic way of thinking.

Q: How about the continuance of the self-consciousness?

Buddhism teaches selflessness and recommends that we become free from attachment to self. Then, what is left behind? It is sometimes called karma and sometimes *alaya* consciousness. In modern terms, it may be expressed as the "first consciousness" (*dai-ichi ishiki* 第一意識). In other words, although originally selfless, the actual human being is in constant mutation through the three worlds because of being attached to self-consciousness.

Q: Concretely what will become the consciousness after death?

Things after death cannot be understood by means of any explanation. Actually, human beings continue to live to the last day, because of self-consciousness, which is attachment to oneself.

ASAHINA (Z): To a person with a weakened spirit, it may sometimes be helpful to say that after his death, God will welcome him in Heaven or that Buddha will take him to Paradise. Zen Buddhism teaches that there is neither life nor death in the Buddha-nature (*bussō* 仏性) in man's mind, that we are now in the midst of *nirvāṇa* (*nehan* 涅槃), that we are living within the Buddha-nature and are merging our bodies in it, and thus we do not die anew. In a word, this means attaining a mental condition transcending



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life and death. The Buddha-nature or *nirvāṇa*, which I speak of here, is neither non-existence (*mu* 無) nor existence (*u* 有) but a world transcending both.

Q: What is the relationship between the Buddha-nature and the body? In speaking of the immortality of the soul, this seems to mean that although the body perishes, the soul itself continues to exist.

Buddha-nature means not only that a human body is a manifestation of the Buddha-nature, but that a table and a cup are also manifestations of it. The Buddha-nature does not concern the existence or non-existence of a body. The end of the continuance of a body is tentatively called death, but this is only an expression applicable to present-day usage.

Q: What do you think about memorial services to the spirits of the dead at the Festival of the Dead (*Bon* 盆)?

I think that such a custom is a combination of racial feeling concerning ancestor worship in the Orient and the Buddhist method. I don't think it necessary to observe this festival. If the faith were thoroughly established, this would mean nothing.

NAKAMURA (B): They say that Buddhism denies the soul, (*reikon* 靈魂), but it does not. It is undefinable (*muki* 無記 indescribable). Buddhism does not say that the soul either is or is not. The view of selflessness (*muga* 無我) also applies to such an expression as that *this* has no *ātman* (*ga* 我, ego) or that *that* is not *ātman*. Buddhism never says that there is no *ātman*. Buddhism is not materialism. Gotama did not deny the soul; he only kept silent about the subject. However, I think Buddhism recognizes a great spirit (*idai na seishin* 偉大な精神) in the phenomenal world.

Q: Does Buddhism have any idea that while the body is mortal, the soul continues to exist?

Buddhism does not have the idea of the soul as substance; but

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it can be said that as an expedient (*hōben* 方便) the concept of soul has been generally accepted by Buddhism. Human knowledge can not definitely say whether or not the soul exists after one's death. It also cannot be said that no function is left after death. Moreover, merely to insist that naturally there is a soul, does not solve human problems. Nevertheless, it cannot be thoroughly denied. It cannot be definitely asserted that either *this* or *that* exists within man-made categories. The idea that the soul exists after death transcends the dimensions of our experience. If its existence is admitted, it is not considered as separate substance which exists *there* and can be seen, but as a great spirit (*idai na seishin* 偉大な精神).

Q: We feel that Buddhism teaches selflessness (*muga* 無我) and denies the continuance of the self-consciousness. What do you think about this?

Selflessness (*muga* 無我) was taught by later primitive Buddhism, but in the beginning only non-self (*higa* 非我) was taught. In other words, the ego (*ga* 我) which people think of or seek after, was not the true ego. Primitive Buddhism taught us to cease to think that what is not ego is ego, and not to seek after ego where there is none, but to grasp the true ego. Then, what concretely is the true ego? It cannot be expressed by a word. It can be caught by silence. There is nothing to do but to keep silent on the subject. Anyhow, it is thought of as transcending both existence and non-existence.

SHIO (J): Let us look at the problem of living. One cannot live alone. First of all, we must be aware of the fact that an individual can live only by living in society. Therefore, even when one dies from an incurable disease, if society can live longer by the sacrifice of his death, the individual would live again (*ikikaeru* 生き返える) in society. This is the Amida Buddha faith, that is, the belief in

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the Infinite Life. Going to the Pure Land after one's death means that a person lives anew in society. The right development of society is an aspect of one's living anew (in it).

Q: In that case, some persons say that after one's death nothing is left, but that the "living" individual may be found in the books he wrote and in his achievements which influence others. What do you think of this view?

Simply speaking, that view is nothing more than a materialistic explanation. It can be said even without reference to a person leaving a single sheet of paper or a single volume.

Q: It is said that Sākya-muni did not teach the immortality of the soul. Isn't this inconsistent with the fact that memorial services, such as the Festival of the Dead (*Bon*) are observed in Japan?

Memorial services for the spirits of the dead are properly functions in which one express hopes (*nengan* 念願) for the extension of his own ability and exerts himself toward this end. In India, the custom was to study and hold discussions in a temple at a three month's retreat (*ango* 安居) during the rainy season, after which came the *Bon* season when the things learned and discussed were taught to others and new activities was given to the people. Therefore, *Bon* meant for Buddhists a new year, when they started new life activities. And the mass for the repose of the dead called, *segaki* 施餓鬼, which literally means almsgiving for the hungry spirits, signifies the awakening of ignorant beings to the truly worthy life, or the Buddha-life. However, this may not be quite so simple, because various sūtras and stories, and in some cases even superstitions, were created. Concerning memorial services for ancestors (*sozen kuyō* 祖先供養), life is not possessed solely by one individual and is not limited to the present. It continues from the past to the future and is related to others. One's life is not isolated but inter-related. This means social life. In this sense, the memorial

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services for ancestors can be understood.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** People often speak of the soul, but this was not discussed in primitive Buddhism which taught only of consciousness (*shiki* 識). With the development of commentaries on consciousness the idea of pure consciousness (*yuishiki* 唯識) was created. According to this, *shiki* 識 (a mental faculty in regard to perception and cognition), exists as something which appears prior to the consciousness. This may be equal to the idea of the subconscious in the occident. If the term "soul" is used from a Buddhist standpoint, it is in this sense. Both Dengyō Daishi and Saint Nichiren used the term of *konpaku* 魂魄, literally, "soul spirit," which seems to be an explanation of *shiki*. I think a ghost is a physical phenomena and not merely a psychical phenomena. It is a materialized appearance. When I was young I used to say that ghosts did not exist, but I regret that I said such a stupid thing.

**Q:** Then, is it natural to observe memorial services for the ancestral souls?

Yes, it is. I believe that this world is composed of the three worlds, the material world, the spiritual world, and the world of souls. I recognize the reality of the soul world, not from a psychological standpoint, but as a matter of fact.

## VIII. BUDDHA AND PURE LAND

**Main Question:** It is often said that the Buddha is presiding in the Pure Land. What is this Pure Land and Buddha? How different are they from the Heaven and God of Christianity?

**KUBOTA (N):** Buddhism does not recognize any god who created the universe, made mankind, and controls the destiny of human beings. Sākya-muni, who lived in India, became Buddha after comprehending (*satoru* 悟る) the dharma (*Hō* 法) which he taught us. Therefore, Sākya-muni is our leader as well as our teacher.

The dharma implies four senses: first, the truth, (*shinri* 真理), that is, the Law (*hōsoku* 法則); second, the norm (*kihan* 規範), that is, the discipline (*kiritsu* 規律); third, the teachings (*oshie* 教え); fourth, spiritual and physical existence (*seishin-teki, nikutai-teki na sonzai* 精神的・肉体的な存在). It was Sākya-muni who clarified the dharma and taught it to the people. His last words were, "make yourself a light and make the dharma a light." Sākya-muni believed himself to be only a seeker after the dharma. After Sākya-muni's death, however, those who yearned after him having increased in number, a belief arose that the true body of Sākya-muni had never perished but that he was teaching us the dharma forever in this world. This is the idea of the Eternal Sākya-muni Buddha (*kuon-jitsujō no shakamuni-butsu* 久遠実成の釈迦牟尼仏 that is, Sākya-muni Buddha who from eternity has realized Buddhahood) referred in the Lotus Sūtra.

If this idea is applied to the Pure Land, the "land," which is regarded as the ideal place where we shall rest after our death, exists in no other world than on this earth, because this world is the place where Sākya-muni is always living and teaching. When our eyes are open to this faith, this world itself is felt to be Paradise,



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and at the same time this Pure Land will be found to be the place where we will be when we breathe our last. From the standpoint of the Lotus Sūtra, the idea that somewhere there exists a Pure Land after one's death, where the Buddha lives and receives those who die, is found to be partial; and at the same time the view that nothing is left after one's death is also seen to be partial.

**MASUTANI (J):** Fundamentally speaking, Buddha is the ideal which man aims to attain. The ideal image of man, however, is found to vary with each area of experience, so that the image of Buddha is pictured in innumerable ways. Furthermore, this has been clarified in various forms by similes, metaphors and myths, for the sake of people who cannot understand Buddha as he is. It is undeniable that there is a fundamental difference between Christianity and Buddhism. Buddhism starts with the idea that man is an existence, while Christianity says that man is a creature. Christianity teaches that in the very beginning, there was God from whom all things are derived and that this God is the fundamental fact and not merely a simile or an expedient. On the other hand, Amida Buddha is more or less in the nature of an expedient (*hōben-setsu* 方便説) because it is made by the consciousness, that is, it is a creation of the mine (*ishiki-shozō no mono* 意識所造のもの).

**KARIYA (N):** We live three lives: the past, the present, and the future. However, we know ourselves only in the present, and forget ourselves in both the future and the past. The Pure Land exists at present because it existed in the past; and it will also exist in the future, because it exists at present. The fact that a man lives in this Pure Land in the present and attains Buddhahood, means that in the past he attained Buddhahood and lived in the Pure Land, and that he also will do so in the future. This is the theory of the Pure Land which is to be lived by man's three lives (*sanze-jōjū no jōdo* 三世常住の浄土).

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Q: Do the Pure Land and Hell actually exist?

Yes, they do. If you could believe that we continuously live through the three lives, you would be able to recognize them. The fact that one is living at present is evidence of life in the past; and the fact of his death in this world means that he lives in the invisible future world.

Q: Is the eternal Sākya-muni Buddha expounded in the Lotus Sūtra a picture of the ideal image of man, or is he a real being?

The idea of eternally living means to live through the three lives continuously. It is impossible to live truly even for an hour today without believing in the power of living eternally. This is the reason why the eternal Original Buddha (*kuon no Honbutsu* 久遠の本仏) is taught.

Q: Is the eternal Sākya-muni Buddha the *dharma* of truth, instead of being something like a personified god?

He is not the *dharma*. Having a personality, the Eternal Buddha is still a seeker in the higher sense. It is the Original Buddha in a reward-body (*hōjin* 報身, *sambhoga-kāya*, Skt. "the blissful manifestation in the person of Buddha") which Tendai Daishi and others emphasized so earnestly.

Q: In Buddhism, a buddha is one who has realized the Law (*Hō* 法, *dharma*, Skt.) as ultimate truth, so if we realize this ultimate truth we too become buddhas. Is it correct to say that the Buddha does not exist outside and over us like the Christian God?

Christianity may have a positive reason for such a teaching. Saint Nichiren referred to the Eternal Original Buddha in the process of expressing "*Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*." In other words, the revelation of the Eternal Original Buddha is still in process, because this *Myōhō Renge Kyo* through which this Buddha lives is the true Buddha; that is, the Tathāgata of *Myōhō Renge Kyō*.

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KANEKO (JS): It may be proper to regard the Pure Land as an ideal or a sacred dream world. Anyway, infinity is not thinkable without finiteness, and finiteness may not exist unless infinity is the premise or background. Human life would not be possible unless we postulated something infinite, such as Buddha, the Pure Land, and previous and future lives. Shin Buddhism teaches that we are not saved directly by Amida Buddha, but by the invocation of the Buddha (*nenbutu* 念仏). In other words, the Buddha does not extend his hands to save us, but we are saved by the name of the Buddha we invoke. If the difference between the Christian God and Buddha is to be shown in a word, the former may be a kind of ego because he has the power of control. Buddha has no ego, no power of control. Furthermore, Buddha is said to discipline himself in order to save us, but Christianity has no such concept.

Q: Does the idea that one is saved by invocation of the Buddha mean that this is done by the *dharma*?

Yes, it does. The invocation of the Buddha is the *dharma*. We, who believe in the *dharma*, become the Body of Buddha Law (*Buppō no mi* 仏法の身), that is to say, we are in the *dharma*. I think it is better not to say too much of personality. If personality is taken up we must introduce the idea of special grace (*onchō* 恩寵). Consequently, the universal sense of religion is nullified.

NISHITANI (P): This is the key point of the various problems which the personality of God produces. The first problem is whether or not it is possible to regard the personality of God as analogous with that of human personality. Simply speaking, it means that, the notion that man is, cannot easily be connected by analogy to the idea that God is. For example, God's love is regarded as different from man's, and from the standpoint of regarding God as the creator, existence as a creator must differ from that of a creature. It may be to some extent possible to consider them as

analogous, but a difficult problem is involved in so doing. In conclusion, in speaking of a personal god, the problem lies in what constitutes personality.

Buddhism says that there is no distinction between mind (*shin* 心), Buddha (*Butsu* 仏) and living beings (*shujō* 衆生). This makes Buddhism differ from Christianity. However, it does not mean that the three things are simply connected by a straight line. To become a buddha means to be embraced by the Buddha; and that Buddha's mind is opened from within means also that one is covered by Buddha's mind. Even in case Buddha is set up as outside, he is constantly taken into one's mind. He is constantly in one's mind, but at the same time, he is a being which always transcends one's self. In the case of being treated inwardly, this inward attitude is Zen; but even Zen also worships Buddha. It is the extreme attitude of Zen that when they meet Buddha, they kill him! They cannot "meet" Buddha and truly touch him until they come to this moment.

Q: In this case, may we regard Buddha as existing substantially instead of being a mere ideal image?

No. We may not do so from the standpoint of Buddhism. This concept differs considerably from something substantial like God in Christianity. However, it cannot be said that it does not exist, because it is not substantial. For example, the mind of man cannot be readily regarded as substantial, but we feel that there is something more real to it than various other things that are substantial. What is usually regarded as substantial, such as the human body and other things, is easily destroyed; but mind, which is not substantial, appears to contain something eternal or real in its true sense.

Q: How about the Pure Land?

As for me, I do not regard the Pure Land as being in a certain

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place. Mind is not a kind of psychological condition, but something which makes the significance of one's existence vary totally by the awakening of the mind. Such an awakening can be regarded as something with the character of a kind of Pure Land or Buddha's country. I think that self-awakening in a true sense has the character of "land" (*do* 土). In other words the Pure Land is in the nature of something which develops in our mind; or when our mind is opened, the Pure Land appears in it. It is not, however, a product of thinking. It is a non-mythologized idea of the Pure Land in a modern sense.

HANAYAMA (JS): The God of Christianity is the creator of the universe and mankind, while in the early times of Buddhism, Sākya-muni, a man, was actually a teacher. However, with the lapse of time, the idea appeared that such an admirable character could not have been achieved only by human discipline. Hence appeared another idea, that Sākya was a buddha who came out of the dharma or the Fundamental Truth in this world in order to enlighten people. The form (*sugata* 姿), which appeared in this world, that is, the Transformation Body or the human form which Buddha assumed in his relations with mankind, is called in Japanese *ōjin* 応身 (*nirmāṇa-kāya*, Skt.), and the Law Body, or the fundamental truth as the original state of Sākya-muni Buddha, is called *hosshin* 法身 (*dharmakāya*, Skt.). Moreover, besides the human Sākya (*ōjin* 応身) and the Sākya as truth (*hosshin* 法身), there is another Buddha-body with the merit of excellent character and truth which is neither merely a man nor truth. This is called the Reward Body or *hōjin* 報身 (*sambhoga-kāya*, Skt.) Amida Buddha is equal to this *hōjin*. Amida Buddha was established in this manner, and according to the explanation, he may possibly look like the God of Christianity. However, from the fundamental viewpoint of realization, he is quite different from God. Saint Shinran worshipped Amida Buddha as absolute wisdom and life, picturing the Buddha



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### as Infinite Light or Immeasurable Life.

Q: I have heard that a Zen priest teaches that to worship Buddha means, in its true sense, to look deeply into oneself. In Pure Land Buddhism, it seems to be taught that one should worship the Buddha who resides in the Western Pure Land and by whom are saved. What is your opinion about this?

Practically speaking, in the Hossō Sect and Sanron Sect in the Nara Era, and in the Tendai Sect and Shingon Sect in the Heian Era, most people believed in Amida Buddha's Western Pure Land or the world after death. Although the explanations were different, the net result seemed to be the same. The question as to whether Buddha is in one's mind or is outside of it must arise from one who has no true faith, but thinks only with his head.

Q: I have heard that Saint Shinran denied the coming of Amida Buddha to welcome (*raigō* 来迎) the spirit of his believer. What does it mean?

If one cannot have spiritual rest without expecting the welcome of Amida Buddha just prior to death, he is not yet full of faith. If he grasps the Pure Land of Buddha and is within Buddha's salvation in daily life, it may not be of any concern to him whether or not Amida comes to welcome him. This does not mean that Saint Shinran denied that Amida Buddha was in the Western Pure Land (*Saihō Jōdo* 西方浄土).

ASAHI (Z): The eternal Buddha (*kuon no Hotoke* 久遠の仏) means the Buddha-nature (*bussō* 仏性) and is different from the personal God (*jinkaku-shin* 人格神) of Christianity. Amida Buddha (*Amida-nyorai* 阿弥陀如来) is also different from such a God. Saint Shinran himself says the Buddha-nature is the tathāgata (*nyorai* 如来). According to Christianity, everything depends upon God's program and without his will even a single small finger cannot be moved. God decides everything. At first thought it looks very easy (*taihen anraku* たいへん安楽), but it sometimes falls into

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fatalism (*shukumei-ron* 宿命論). Buddhism does not consider such a God. It believes in the grandeur of ultimate truth, that is, the dharma, but it does not follow something with a personal will.

Q: What does it mean to worship at a Buddhist altar (*butsudan* 仏壇) and to pray for something?

It is an expression of the desire that all men may be happy and not the expectation that the object of prayer, a god or a buddha, will fulfil our prayer.

Q: Wouldn't even a high priest seek the Buddha or the Pure Land that embraces him at the moment of his dying?

Buddha, nirvāṇa (*nehan* 涅槃) or the Pure Land transcend time and space. Therefore, in speaking of the "attainment to Buddhahood in this body" (*sokushin-jōbutsu* 即身成仏) or "this world is the Pure Land itself" (*Shaba-soku-jōdo* 娑婆即淨土), our attitude of standing in the present and looking at the future is not wrong. For the future is also the present.

NAKAMURA (B): First, it can be said that Buddha and we are fundamentally one. However, when we perform some acts, we set up an ideal (*risō* 理想). When the fundamental thing appears before us as an ideal, this becomes the Buddha which we worship. The fundamental one appears before us as a thing which is looked at as being there. In this sense, it can be said that Buddha and we are different. When the one is pictured as our model or ideal, it is in apposition to us, as another being; and when this point is stressed, it becomes the Other Power. Zen Buddhism does not emphasize this side. It teaches Buddha-nature. However, it also worships Buddha. This looks inconsistent, but it is not.

Q: Couldn't we say that such a buddha really exists as another being?

Yes, we can; but still it differs from man. If also differs from the Christian God. Christianity teaches that the only one and

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absolute personal God created the universe. If so, why has such a God created this incomplete world? I don't think that he should have created such a world, if he is absolute Love.

Q: Does Buddha's benevolence (*jihi* 慈悲) differ from God's love?

It may be to some extent the same, but it nonetheless different. For God has punishment and hatred (*nikushimi* 憎しみ) but Buddha has absolute benevolence. He has only love, and no hatred.

Q: Why does Buddhism set up various buddhas?

The many buddhas may be recognized as corresponding to various functions.

Q: Buddhism teaches the future Pure Land (*raise-jōdo* 来世浄土), and yet it says that this world is the Pure Land itself. It is very difficult for us to understand this.

It may be difficult to understand, because you discriminate between this life and the future and make them oppose each others. This life is enveiled with something absolute, so that when we do willingly what we should do in this life, it means obeying the absolute. This is the attainment to Buddhahood in this body (*sokushin-jōbutsu* 即身成仏). On the other hand, when we die, the life (*seikatsu* 生活) in this world has ended and we return to the absolute. This does not seem to be contradictory.

**SHIHO (J):** Buddhist thought is living and always progressing. The Christian God is regarded as being a complete and the most ideal being, so that from the viewpoint of real existence in its true sense, God has gone out.

Q: Don't you regard Amida Buddha as a personal existence which transcends mankind?

No, we don't. Therefore, formerly neither wooden images nor metal images were made. Christianity made them. First, Amida Buddha said that he would save anyone who invoked his name.

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This means, concerning life (*inochi* 命), to live endlessly, concerning light (*hikari* 光), unlimited light, and concerning the name, the infinite name. You may invoke any name. You may call it, for example, grass or clothing; the endless life is explained in this infinite name. Such is Amida Buddha.

Q: What is the essence of Amida?

It is the fact of life (*seikatsu* 生活). It is life activity which is progressing and developing. When this is expressed, it becomes Amida Buddha. However, as expression is necessarily followed by a sense of individual existence (*kozai-kan* 個在感),\* Amida Buddha is apt to be regarded as an individual existence.

Q: Is it an individual existence idea or an illusion (*mayoi* 迷い) to set up a personal existence which transcends ourselves?

You must be afraid that adherence to this idea will make you forget the life activity of society as a whole.

SHIMIZUDANI (T): Buddhism is neither monotheism nor pantheism. If *Kannon* is considered, all things are a manifestation of *Kannon*. Bansui Doi, a Japanese poet, composed a poem to the effect that *Kannon* was born as Christ at Bethlehem. In this way, he was born as Sākya-muni in India, and as Confucius in China. They are all incarnations of *Kannon*. Therefore, it is ridiculous for Buddhists and Christians to oppose each other.

Q: Then, is it necessary to specially mention *Kannon*?

You are right. More extremely speaking, it is unnecessary to say that Christians should be converted to Buddhism. Since Christ was born as an incarnation of *Kannon*, we can worship Christ as he is.

Q: How about the fact that Nichiren attacked other sects and insisted that buddhas other than the Eternal Sākya-muni were meaningless, while the Pure Land teaches dependence upon Amida Buddha?

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\* This expression is unique with Dr. Shiio.

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I think this was because it was feared that a single-minded faith might be disturbed if the believer's attention was diverted to others. However, Saint Shinran disciplined himself in the Tendai Sect and shutting himself up in *Rokkakudō* (六角堂) prayed to the sacred *Kannon* for fulfilment of his wish. Saint Nichiren studied a great deal of Shingon doctrine. Neither one limited himself to his sectarian doctrine.

Q: How about the problem of the Pure Land after death?

I also think that when I die, I shall go to Amida Buddha in the Western Pure Land. This must be a feeling of relying on Amida Buddha as a personality. It is *Kannon* who carries me on a lotus flower to Amida Buddha. While alive I am, so to speak, covered with the great love and benevolence of *Kannon* and after death I shall rest in the land of Amida.

Q: Which is the master, Amida or *Kannon*?

All Buddhas and Buddhisattvas are nothing but various symbols of the truth. When the truth is regarded as Amida Buddha, all things can be said to be derived from Amida. It is the same way with *Kannon* or *Dainichi-nyorai* (大日如来).

## IX. NON-KILLING

**Main Question :** Buddhism attaches importance to non-killing. In this connection, what do you think about capital punishment?

**KUBOTA (N):** From the viewpoint of Buddhism, it is not permissible to kill a man in disregard of his karma, which has not yet been extinguished. Generally speaking, it can be said that it is a debasement of man's dignity for man to judge man and condemn him to death.

**Q:** What do you think about eating-meat?

To sacrifice others for one's own benefit fundamentally runs counter to the teaching of Buddhism. Therefore, strictly speaking, except for the fruit of plants which exist for the purpose of being eaten by others, I think that we should not kill and eat even a plant, not to mention an animal. However, in reality, we cannot but do so. Here is one of the sorrows of mankind. It goes without saying that to deprive others of their lives for useless purposes is a sinful act (*zaiaku* 罪惡).

**MASUTANI (J):** The killing of living things appears on the surface to be a very slight problem, but it is a problem which is filled with great contradictions. I hold to the idea of *ahimsā* that is, non-hurting as advocated by Gandhi. It is the idea that we should not have a cruel mind even when we fight an enemy, kill a mosquito, or kill a cow for food. The problem of capital punishment may also be solved in this way. The idea should be eradicated that the bereaved feel relief when they hear that a murderer has been sentenced to capital punishment.

Regarding the abolition of capital punishment, this must be considered from the legal point of view, which has due regard for general conditions. It cannot definitely be said that Buddhism



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completely opposes capital punishment. For example, in a society where murder occurs, if circumstances require, a legal system such as capital punishment may be necessary. Anyway, it will depend upon a broad and exact judgement about contemporary social conditions.

**KARIYA (N):** This must be discussed from the point of view of the condition of the people and the degree of their self-awakening. When the cultural standard of the people is heightened, capital punishment will become unnecessary. Properly speaking, it should be abolished. To live is precious. Saint Nichiren says that life is the first treasure of one's body and the prolongation of a day may deserve more than ten millions of gold. The Lotus Sūtra teaches us to respect and worship life.

**KANEKO (JS):** I approve of the total abolition of capital punishment and this may be in accord with natural human feeling. However, if the matter is considered from the standpoint of a condemned criminal, there may be cases where he attains religious awakening by the sentence of death and, becoming aware of the significance of human life, desires to be executed.

**Q:** What do you think about the fact that in Southern Buddhism there are strict precepts against the killing of even a mosquito?

That is the Buddhist way; but if man must kill mosquitoes he should live a life worthy enough to do so. As far as sentient beings are concerned, in Buddhism there is no discrimination between man, animals, and plants. They all have a blood connection with one another. Therefore, if one must live by the sacrifice of others, he must pay the necessary price. In other words, he must live a life that is worthy of others being killed for him.

**Q:** Is there any possibility of approving men killing each other?

Such was our feeling in wartime. People at present say that manslaughter is not permissible; but war makes this position un-

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tenable. However, when one kills another, he must assume that he also may be killed. The Buddhist attitude in some cases would be that I should be killed and bless the killer. As for Japan, if world peace was realized at the cost of the country's defeat, then Japan must be satisfied with this sacrifice of itself.

**Q:** Is war inevitable?

I think that the most wholesome attitude is to believe that abolition of war is a possibility. We should try to avoid war; but unless human beings get rid of their evil nature, a certain karma-cause (*gōen* 業縁) is operative and war may occur. This is a sad thing.

**NISHITANI (P):** From the standpoint of Buddhism, capital punishment cannot be approved. Many problems, however, arise in connection with capital punishment. Therefore, though abolition is the ideal, it seems to be difficult of realization. For example, in some cases condemned criminals are glad to die with the feeling that they are to be saved by faith. Moreover, the relatives of the victim suffer intensely (because of their loss). Anyway, there are many problems to be carefully considered.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** Abolition of capital punishment may be acceptable as an ideal, but before this ideal can be realized several stages remain. When it is abolished and somebody attempts to take advantage of the situation because, even though he may kill many men, he will not be executed, what measures shall be adopted? This must be considered. On the other hand, from a religious standpoint, it may be said that a man can live in greater joy by being aware of death. In this regard, it may be questionable whether or not he can be happy because he has been released from capital punishment.

As for myself, I think the ideal is to leave capital punishment in the law but to apply it very seldom, that is, as far as possible to not impose it.

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**ASAHINA (Z)**: I should like to abolish the system of man sentencing man to death, but I fear that worse men may appear, if they can escape death even when they have killed others. I think we can devise some method such as banishment to a remote island, if we do not condemn them to death. We cannot readily say whether abolition of the death penalty would be good or bad.

**NAKAMURA (B)**: It is not good to sentence a person to death with the idea of retribution. This runs counter to the spirit of benevolence. However, as a preventive measure, it must be question whether or not the abolition of capital punishment would be good. If felonous acts should increase because the guilty are not sentenced to death, a great problem would arise. However, society should move in the direction of abolition. For this purpose, education and the standard of living should be raised. To raise the living standard does not necessarily mean material betterment. For example, there are more cases of manslaughter than one may think in America, where mechanical or material civilization is advanced; while there are fewer in India where mechanical civilization has made less advance. This is because the idea of not beating or killing others permeates Indian life as a religious faith. Anyway, advancing education and improving livelihood must result in a decrease in crime. As quickly as possible the penalty should be eliminated.

**SHIIO (J)**: Because society is crude, capital punishment is necessary; but punishment of this sort is too frequent because not only is Japanese law imperfect, but the judges are also unskilled. Hence, there are many cases where capital punishment has been wrongly applied. The abolition of capital punishment must be a long way off; but in principle, it should be abolished.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T)**: As an ideal, capital punishment should be abolished. There seem to be alternative methods such as exile to an island or something like that which would prevent them from returning to the society during their lifetime. Furthermore, in

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place of depriving a man of his life I think it would be better to castrate one who has committed a very cruel act. Many cruel crimes are caused by sexual desire. This subject should be considered from the standpoint of heredity.

## X. BUDDHISM AND THE EMPEROR-SYSTEM

**Main Question:** From the standpoint of Buddhism, what is your opinion about the emperor-system?

**KUBOTA (N):** Buddhism takes the position that one who occupies a highly respected office does so as a reward for his past good deeds. A Japanese Buddhist term, "emperor of ten virtues" (*jūzen no kimi* 十善の君) means one who becomes a king as a reward for having done ten good things. From this point of view, we need not deny our feeling of respect toward the emperor. However, if an emperor does harm or causes suffering to the people it is natural that Buddhism does not tolerate him.

**Q:** What polity or form of state does Buddhism regard as ideal?

In Sākya-muni's Order (*saṃgha*), all beings are equal. In this regard, it can be said to be a communal group. However, in regard to the question of the state, each country differs in regard to the history of its establishment, so that no abstract general view can be applied to all. Under special conditions, a republic may be appropriate to some countries and a monarchy to others. As for me, I think it best for present-day Japan to continue as a constitutional monarchy.

**MASUTANI (J):** A Buddhist view of the state cannot be clearly drawn from the teachings of Sākya-muni himself. In short, in Sākya-muni's view it is the individual that counts most. Whatever the polity may be, this view must be respected. Therefore, if in interpreting the emperor-system the view is adopted that one must willingly die for the sake of the emperor, this must be rejected from Sākya-muni's standpoint. As for me, I think that the emperor-system is all right as it is; but the consciousness that one should die for the sake of the emperor should be rejected.

**KARIYA (N):** The emperor-system is all right as long as it is

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necessary. According to the Lotus Sūtra, a true king governs in the consciousness that he is living in mutual interdependence with all others. Moreover, there is the concept that he exists for the sake of the people.

Q: What is your opinion about the fact that unless one is born in the Imperial Family, he cannot become emperor?

This may be all right as long as such a thing is needed.

Q: Do you mean that when another person appears, who is able to rule better than the emperor, he should be made the ruler in the place of the emperor?

If such a time comes, that also will be all right. In short, it must correspond to the need of the times.

Q: Saint Nichiren included in his maṇḍala the Heavenly Ancestress (*Tenshō-daijin* 天照大神) and Emperor Ōjin (*Hachiman Daibosatsu* 八幡大菩薩). When this is propagated abroad, is it alright to remove them from the maṇḍala?

If there are substitutes for them, this may be done. It is the "the Wonderful Law" (*Myōhō* 妙法) and the meaning of the maṇḍala to live in mutual interdependence with all things. Therefore, anything suitable for the realization of the Wonderful Law can be added to the maṇḍala.

KANEKO (JS): From the viewpoint of Buddhism, there should not be any concept such as "man-god" (*arahito-gami* 現人神) as advocated by Shintō. The concept of symbol as stated in the present Constitution, however, may be Buddhistic. The emperor-system in Japan is democratic (*minpon-teki* 民本的). From the standpoint of the people it should be emperor-centric and from the standpoint of the emperor, people-centric. I emphasized this during the war and still have the same idea.

Q: What is your opinion regarding the point that only those who are born in the Imperial Family, can ascend the throne?

I think the most natural way is to let a person born of the



Imperial Family ascend the throne as the symbol of the country. Otherwise a struggle for power may easily occur. In short, we bow to the symbol.

**NISHITANI (P):** It is quite natural as a matter of principle that democracy is better than an absolute monarchy as far as the liberty and independence of people and human sovereignty is concerned. However, democracy has many defects in its operation. On the other hand, even an absolute monarchy can become an excellent system, when it is administered in a religious manner, as can be seen from ancient examples. As for me, I do not regard the emperor-system as an absolute monarchy. I think there is a fundamental difference between the two. Christianity, teaches that a despotic ruler and a slave are regarded as equal before God. This may be as important as a reformation of the government-system. For, even though it is difficult to realize a reformation of the political structure, human relations which reside within the framework of the structure, may break down the barrier from the inside. Anyway, when a religious mind is operative a despotic ruler will cease to be despotic and people will become free from the ruler's restrictions. On this basis, the structure itself will be gradually reformed.

**HANAYAMA (JS):** Buddhism does not seem to concern itself directly with the problem of the emperor-system. Buddhism itself does not recognize the existence of any class distinction among people. Sākya-muni advocated equality of the four castes. Whether the Japanese governmental structure should be a representative system, a communistic system, or the emperor-system may be a problem which the Japanese people should decide; but it is not particularly a problem for Buddhism. Buddhism is a universal religion which can be taught in any country under any form of government. It is the ideal of Buddhism to save individual souls and give them peace.

**ASAHINA (Z):** Sākya-muni, who said in India where the caste-

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system was very strong that the value of man did not depend upon family or caste, can be said to have had a very revolutionary idea. When a high priest of Zen Buddhism in Japan in preaching before an emperor, told the emperor that he also was a very pitiful being at a loss (to know) what he should do, the priest did not regard the emperor as a special being.

Q: What form of government do you think ideal?

The emperor-system has a long history in Japan, so I do not think it necessary to abolish this system. It may be all right for us to retain this system as the symbol of the state. However, the actual power must reside in the people. If the emperor had absolute power, it would be very dangerous.

NAKAMURA (B): As far as Buddhism is concerned, government should be based on benevolence (*jihi* 慈悲). Another point is that the suitable form of government must correspond to the historical and social conditions of the times. There are many types of government described in the Buddhist scriptures, but further study discloses that the times were different. Concerning the problem of the emperor-system, the fact that the Imperial Family has continued as one dynasty is a matter of pride quite distinct from that expounded by the militarists. The reason for this is that this system has existed from time immemorial. This means that in this country there has been no serious opposition between ruler and ruled and conditions have been relatively peaceful. Anyway, the Imperial Family may remain as a typical family of Japan. However, it should be separated from the administration of the government. The destruction of dynasties is a world tendency and therefore the emperor system will probably disappear. However, it is desirable that this be brought about naturally and not by machine guns or guillotine.

Q: A Buddhist sūtra seems to teach something to the effect that a person who is chosen as king is one who had a good karma in the previous life. What do you think about this?

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This does not mean that he performed good deeds in his previous life. It means that in the future a king should realize the ten good laws in his country. However, in Japan in order to defend the emperor-system, it was interpreted to mean the past.

**SHIIO (J):** The emperor-system is a type of country with a core (*Yūkaku kokka keitai* 有核国家形態)\* in its center. The emperor must come among the whole people. The president-system is moving toward this type. The president-government is not tainted by germs. It has the good elements of a government with "a core". Japan is of a type of government with a core, but it has germs. The military, nobles, and rich, who possessed exclusive power, injured Japan's polity. The evil of the Emperor-system arose at this point.

**Q:** How about the emperor-system based upon heredity?

Human character cannot be perceived at any one time. There are many cases of persons who appeared to be superior and later proved to be otherwise. In this regard, it is important to make a superior blood and preserve it. However, if a person superior to the emperor should be discovered, he must be set up and the emperor be removed.

**Q:** How about the idea that birth in the Imperial Family is the result of the accumulation of past good karma?

That idea is wrong. It is wrong, because it is the idea of retribution (*inga-ōhō-shisō* 因果応報思想) attached to individualism (*kozai-shisō* 個在思想). The position of the emperor should be materialized in society.

**SHIMIZUDANI (T):** Even the emperor, from the standpoint of Buddhism, is nothing but an ordinary man. Therefore, it was quite wrong to regard him as man-god as he was during war-time. I think it is all right, however, if he is a democratic emperor, the

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\* This expression is unique with Dr. Shiio.

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symbol of Japan, as he is now. As for the type of government, the emperor-system is still good for Japan. In our country the one who is comparable to the president of foreign countries is the prime-minister. He takes all responsibility. The emperor is the symbol of the state. This type is best for Japan.

## IMPRESSIONS AND EVALUATION

Shin'ichirō Imaoka

After reading the report of the ten interviews, my first impression is that Buddhism is not difficult to understand. Many people seem to think that religion concerns miracles, revelation, or supernatural things, which are different from human experiences in general; but it is made clear in these interviews that few superhuman factors are found in Buddhism. In other words, Buddhism as presented here is a form of humanism, which can be understood by any human being. My second impression is that these are not the views of Buddhist believers in general, but are explanations of Buddhist ideas by first-class leaders and scholars in the Buddhist world. Therefore, I think that in this report I have been able to study the most advanced, modern Buddhism in Japan.

What is the modern Buddhism? On the basis of these interviews, I should like to summarize it under three questions.

I. Man: Does Buddhism hold a non-soul view (*mureikoron* 無靈魂論) of life?

**SOUL:** Prof. Kubota says that Sākya-muni Buddha did not teach the immortality of the soul in the sense of naive realism. (7)\* According to Prof. Masutani, denial of the soul is based upon the dependent origination theory (7), and Prof. Nishitani states that Sākya-muni denied the soul in an ordinary sense. (7) Prof. Hanayama, however, believes that Buddhism stresses karma instead of the soul and that "we must not think that such a thing exists or remains objective." (7) Prof. Nakamura maintains that Buddhism is silent in regard to the problem of soul (7), and this is confirmed by Abbot Shimizudani, who says that "the soul was not discussed in primitive

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\* The numbers in parenthesis refer to the sections of the interviews.

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Buddhism." (7)

In short, Buddhism is a non-soul faith. Therefore, memorial services for ancestors are not based upon the belief that the individual souls of ancestors continue to exist but, as Prof. Masutani says, they are in order "to call our ancestors to mind, because we have inherited their karma." (7) Abbot Asahina refers to the Festival for Dead (*Bon*), the biggest annual event for the souls of the dead, somewhat extremely in saying that this custom may be abolished if faith is thoroughly attained, because it is only a Buddhist form of the racial sentiment of orientals. (7) In Dr. Shiio's opinion the meaning of ancestral memorial services must be found in the fact that "one life is not isolated but is interrelated," that is, it is a "social life," and "*Bon* meant for Buddhists a New Years, when they started new life activities." (7) Prof. Nakamura, however, says, in regard to belief in life after death, that the concept of soul has been generally accepted as an expedient (*hōben* 方便). (7) While Prof. Kaneko seems to speak somewhat extremely in saying that Buddhism, which "teaches the transcendence of life and death," is never concerned with the problem of life after death. (7)

Denial of the existence of the soul, however, is not a denial of oneself, which is subject to responsibility. As Prof. Hanayama says, "Buddhism stresses karma instead of the soul;" (7) and he insists that the karma idea is different from fatalism. (3) Confirming this Prof. Masutani believes that interpreting karma in the sense of fatalism is wrong, and that the proper way is to put karma before us, and not behind us. (3) Moreover, Dr. Shiio explains that the view of the karma in a previous life is "an idea by which a sense of personal responsibility may be heightened." (6)

SIN: The question of responsibility, however, leads naturally to the problem of sin. Prof. Masutani says that primitive Buddhism had no sin-concept and that Indian thought concerns only unrest and suffering in contrast with the idea of sin in Christianity and evil



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in Greek thought. (6) It is questionable, however, whether there is a fundamental difference between evil, sin and suffering. Prof. Masutani also recognizes that there is a sin concept in Pure Land Buddhism, and Prof. Hanayama says that ignorance (*avidyā*), which is a basic element constituting polluted human life, is a fundamental idea in Buddhism. (6) There are fundamental spiritual problems, insists Prof. Hanayama, which really exist and which cannot be solved simply by means of economic or medical treatment and social security. This position is supported by Prof. Nakamura, who points out that basic human evils cannot be removed by social reform. (4) Prof. Kaneko adds that being a man in itself is a source of affliction and sinfulness and, emphasizing that it is this that Buddhism solves, he points out that in this regard Buddhism is different from the so-called newly established religions. (6)

Such being the case, the sin-concept of Buddhism and the theory of original sin in Christianity appear to have something in common. The theory of original sin in Christianity as popularly understood is that the first sin committed by Adam and Eve, the progenitors of the human race who ate the forbidden fruit at Eden, has been transmitted to subsequent generations. This story is sometimes misunderstood and thought to be absurd, but to tell the truth, I think that the myth itself did not create the theory of original sin, but rather that it was the fact of original sin that created the myth.

Buddhism tentatively denies the soul but, as above mentioned, it contains a serious *avidyā*-view, that is, the concept of fundamental evil. Therefore, as Prof. Nakamura points out, Buddhism does not deny the true ego. (7) Prof. Kubota says the significance of human life lies in becoming a buddha (1), and that it is "our ideal to become buddhas." (2) Thus the true ego is after all a self-awakened Buddha-nature. In this regard, Prof. Nishitani explains quite clearly that "the true self taught in Buddhism must be a self with a broad

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and large "center" (*shin* 心 literally, "mind" or "heart"), which is grasped from the standpoint of voidness (*kū* 空); that is, self-awakening (*jikaku* 自覺) which Zen Buddhism stresses but is also found in the sincere faith advocated by the Shin sects." (7) This being the case, it is understood that the idea of respect for personality in the occident really exists in Buddhism, though there is a difference of nuance. Therefore, I heartily agree with Abbot Shimizudani that the expression, "in the heavens above and earth beneath I alone am the honored one" (1), which has been handed down as the first utterance of the Buddha soon after he was born, is an expression of respect of personality in Buddhism.

### II. God: Is Buddhism really atheism?

It is usually stated that the difference between Christianity and Buddhism lies in the contrast between theism and atheism, and this idea is expressed frequently in the interviews. A typical of statement of this idea is that of Abbot Shimizudani who said, the world was not created by God but "is formed by virtue of our common karma". (3) But this always raises questions about Amida Buddha in Pure Land Buddhism. Amida Buddha is seemingly a personal deity, but Prof. Masutani says, "Amida Buddha is more or less in the nature of an expedient (*hōben-setsu* 方便説)." (8) Furthermore, in regard to the true character of Amida, Dr. Shiio says:

"The essence of Amida is the fact of life. It is life activity which is progressing and developing. When this is expressed, it becomes Amida Buddha. However, as expression is necessarily followed by a sense of individual existence (*kozai-kan* 個在感), Amida is apt to be regarded as an individual existence." (8)

Abbot Asahina, however, says that when we worship at a Buddhist altar there is no object such as a Buddha or a deity (8), and Prof. Kaneko states that "we are not saved directly by Amida

Buddha but by the invocation of the Buddha (*nenbutsu* 念仏)."(8) If this is really so, then Buddhism becomes somewhat incomprehensible, because it teaches worship without an object and faith without an object. However, according to Prof. Nakamura, the Buddha and we are basically one. The fundamental one becomes an ideal when it appears before us. In this sense, Buddha and we are different things. When this tendency is emphasized, it becomes Other Power Buddhism. When it is not emphasized, it is Zen Buddhism. Thus, it is not inconsistent that in Zen, which advocates the Buddha-nature, they worship Buddha.(8) Prof. Nishitani on the other hand, states that "to become a buddha means to be embraced by the Buddha;" and that "Buddha's mind is opened from within means also that one is covered by Buddha's mind." "Even in case Buddha is set up as outside," says Prof. Nishitani, "he is constantly taken into one's mind." This Buddha, we are told, has no substance; but though he is not substantial, he is more real than substance. (8) Thus, Prof. Nishitani resolves our questions clearly.

This being the case we nevertheless learn that in Buddhism, which is said to be atheistic, there are some rather theistic elements, and that in what is called the Self Power teaching, there are some elements of the Other Power teaching. On the surface, the two things may be distinctly differentiated; but in the religious experience itself, which exists behind the words, there may be no very fundamental difference between them. It is, however, dangerous and wrong simply to define the two things as one. Because they are different, they can achieve considerable progress by complementing each other. If theism becomes too theistic, there is a danger of its becoming dualistic (*tairitsu-teki* 対立的), personality splitting, and inspirational, that is, emphasizing divine possession (*kami-gakari-teki* 神がかり的). In contrast to this, when atheism becomes too atheistic, there is the danger of its becoming nihilistic and dogmatic, and prostituting itself (*jitoku-kōiteki* 自流行為的).

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### III. Society: Is Buddhism really an unworldly religion?

Many people believe that Buddhism is individualistic, spiritual (*yuishin-teki* 唯心的), pessimistic, and a religion centered in the future life. These religious leaders, however, make it clear that this idea is based on prejudice and a complete misunderstanding of the faith. Prof. Masutani says, "the problem is, which is more important, the social structure or the individual;" two things which, he says, cannot be regarded as separate. (4) Abbot Asahina says that "it does not seem to be a good thing for religion to stand aloof from social, political or economic problems," and that "teaching only individual salvation is useless." He declares that we must go so far as to stress a World Federation system. (4) Prof. Kariya says that "we live a life of mutual interdependence with all things," and "I am living for others, they are living for me." (1) He finds the meaning of life in chanting the sacred formula, "*Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō*," as an expression of the earnest vow (*negai* 願い) to establish an ideal society." (4) Dr. Shiio, insisting on cooperation and communal living, comments that "Buddhism puts its fundamental faith in the collective world view." (2) Prof. Nakamura, in explanation of the dependent origination (*engi* 緣起) theory, says that "when one is engaged in an occupation with ten thousand other people, his work is linked with the work of all those people and he is not merely one ten-thousandth of the whole." (1) In short, all agree to the point that Buddhism is not merely an individualistic teaching but a completely social faith. Dr. Shiio, in this regard says, somewhat extremely that "the separation of government from religion is evidence that politics is inferior," and adds, "it is the mission of religion to improve the social structure." (4)

The social nature of Buddhism is clearly evident in its recognition of the collective karma as well as the individual karma. Abbot Asahina says that "the world is inter-woven with collective karma,"

and that "it is incorrect to consider causality or good and evil only from the individual standpoint." (3) Dr. Shiio comments:

"Let us look at the problem of living. One cannot live alone.

First of all, we must be aware of the fact that an individual can live only by living in society. Therefore, even when one dies from an incurable disease, if society can live longer by the sacrifice of his death, the individual would live anew (*ikikaeru* 生き返える) in society. This is the Amida Buddha faith, that is, the belief in the infinite life. Going to the Pure Land after one's death means that a person lives anew in society. The right development of society is an aspect of one's living anew (in it)." (7)

Buddhism is never a simple spiritualism (*yuishin-ron* 唯心論). Prof. Kubota says that "we should hold to the basic principle of living as we ought to live, and at the same time, we should endeavor to improve physical conditions," (4) and Abbot Asahina adds that "each one should harmoniously adjust himself to both aspects of life establishing his own ideal." (2) Prof. Masutani concludes that "it seems to be admitted that Buddhism also has a tendency to materialism." (3) Thus, the Buddhist position lies in the unity of matter and spirit.

Buddhism is neither pessimism nor merely a future-life-principle (*raise-shugi* 来世主義). It is true, as Prof. Hanayama says, that all Buddhists in the Nara period and the Heian period used to believe in the future life in the Pure Land of Amida Buddha. Shinran himself, we are told, did not deny Amida Buddha in the Western Pure Land. (8)\* But Prof. Kubota says, it is inevitable that one should be prejudiced and insist that either there is a Pure Land in the world after death or there is not. The most realistic Pure Land, he believes, is that which is in the actual world itself. (8) In other words, the Buddhist ideal lies in making actual society a Pure Land,

\* Shinran is generally recognized as emphasizing the presence of Amida in this life. Ed.

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or a Buddha country. Referring again to Dr. Shiio, he says that because we get away from religion, the government becomes poor. Therefore, he believes that the improvement of the social structure is in itself religion.(4) But Dr. Shiio seems to speak extremely in saying that because specific rituals and doctrines have been created and these are regarded as religion, religion itself has become incompetent, while a country which does not claim to stand for religion (the Soviet Union) is realizing an ideal world. (4)

## CONCLUSION

In contrast with these socialistic Buddhist views, Prof. Nishitani says that teachers of religion should not meddle in political and economic matters;(4) Prof. Hanayama that, "religion should not assume responsibility for all sorts of miscellaneous matters;" (4) and Prof. Nakamura, that social reform and religion are of different dimensions.(4) Thus there seems to be a conflict of ideas, but I do not necessarily think so. The word "religion" used by these three probably means religious specialists and religious denominations. In contrast with them, Dr. Shiio and Abbot Asahina interpret Buddhism or religion in a broader sense. For example, they seem to try to make it clear that problems such as the solution of original evil (*konpon-aku* 根本惡) is not an abstract psychological function, separate from our daily life.

If I very frankly confess my impression after reading this report, the views of these men seem to be rather indefinite. When I read that "religious need only appears at a time of crisis," or that "it is a definite faith of the Shin sects that, if one can be satisfied with cheap wages, it may be all right," I cannot but find in these statements something incomprehensible. Prof. Nishitani also says, however, that "when a religious mind is operative" in a social structure requiring reform, "human-relations may break down the barrier from the inside." (10) This helps me to understand him in



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general. However, I should like to have the participants wrestle with these problems with more force and clarity. I should like to have them make it clear that one who believes that "it is a good day, everyday," even if one has no food for tomorrow, can still exert himself in acquiring food; and that because one has a faith strong enough to overcome the situation caused by low wages, he nonetheless can devote himself to movements to raise wages. In other words, I would like to have them deal further with the position of Japanese Buddhism, Mahā-yāna Buddhism, or Layman Buddhism (*Zaike Bukkyō* 在家仏教), which advocates that efforts to acquire food and improve wages are in themselves religion. From this viewpoint, I sympathize with and am grateful for the comments of Dr. Shiio and Abbot Asahina.

## COMMENTS BY SIX YOUNGER BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

After the main project had been completed the summary of the interviews was submitted to six younger Buddhist scholars (See Acknowledgment for their names) and they were subsequently invited to the Institute for an evening of free discussion. The following is a digest of their comments.

### I. THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE

**Negai** 願い (ideal, hope, vow)

Professor Masutani's and Professor Kaneko's concepts of *negai*, are in general agreement, but a question was raised as to whether the word *negai* should be understood as hope (*kibō* 希望), which we use in our everyday life, or whether it has a special meaning peculiar to Buddhism. Regarding this the following comments were of special interest.

—"Since everybody has *negai*, to only have *negai* does not constitute an answer. I'd like to be shown concretely what kind of *negai* is taught by Buddhism."

—"The problem is where we should find this *negai*, and what should be regarded as *negai*."

—"It is necessary to discriminate between *negai* in a general sense and in Buddhism, that is, *gan* 願 (vow)."

—"Because Professor Kaneko is a priest of a Shin-Sect which stresses the Vow (*hongan* 本願) of Amida Buddha or the forty-eight vows, he is trying to express in the term *negai*, both the worldly idea of *negai* and something that transcends it."

—"The present time (*genjitsu* 現実) touches the future, but this does not produce such an optimistic view that the *negai* established at present can be realized in the future. It means that actuality is not constant but transient every moment and finally disappears,

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so that neither a positive *negai* nor a foundation (*yoridokoro* 拠り所) can be found in actuality itself."

### Transiency (*mujō* 無常)

All but one or two agreed with the view that Buddhist teachings about the uncertainty of life deal with such matters. Questions were raised, however, as to whether Buddhist teaching of this kind might drive us to a stage of hopelessness and nihilism or whether it might indicate the world to be attained by overcoming them.

—"The teaching that the actual world is transient until death makes us understand that the eternally indestructible world exists at a point which transcends actuality. The true *negai* can be established on the basis of that world. However, the simple conception that such an indestructible world exists in confrontation to this transient actual world, runs counter to the spirit of Buddhism."

—"The teaching of transiency in Buddhism does not assume that the indestructible world exists as the reverse side of this world. Strictly speaking, Buddhism recommends that we look straight at the actual transiency. Therefore, Buddhism is apt to be misunderstood as being richly colored by nihilism and hopelessness. However, when we penetrate into this transiency and the death of human life and see through nihilism and hopelessness, it becomes possible to transcend them. This is the idea of voidness (*kū* 空) in Buddhism. This does not mean that we should stop with nihilism, but that we should penetrate it, that is, break through it."

It was concluded after some discussion that both opinions were in essential agreement though the expression of them were from opposite angles.

### Background

—"When I was repatriated from the front, I found that due to the disaster of war all my family had died. At that moment, I fell

into a thorough state of absent-mindedness and tears barely came into my eyes. Soon, I was attacked by an awful loneliness, as if I were somehow falling headlong into a bottomless pit. I continued to cry for several hours regardless of those about me. Strange to say, however, a sense of security came to me. I had a feeling that instead of passing away my family had returned to the great life (*ōkina seimei* 大きな生命), which in a Buddhist expression is 'the world of Buddha-nature.' I felt that this great life was surrounding me and that I was sitting conspicuously in the middle. As soon as I felt this way there was no loneliness. This feeling still continues today. My parents and brothers are always in the background and they are constantly pushing me forward."

The account of this experience led to interpretation to the effect that, even when a *negai* has been established in actuality, without the background it would not have been reached satisfactorily.

—"The said background, however, should be, bottomless, a nihilistic ground, so to speak. Though it is continuously bottomless, it sometimes appears as something very subjective. On the other hand, it may be regarded as relating to the future or the world after death. The future, however, is not only in front but also is pushing from rear. Conversely speaking, what is pushed by the past is always extending to the front. Thus, the Buddhist view regards past, present, and future as a recurring cycle."

—"Because man is mortal, he has the idea that he should make every possible effort in order to fulfill his duty as long as he lives. This idea constitutes our final ground and support. In this regard, I agree with Prof. Masutani."

—"The significance of life should be regarded from the viewpoint of the way in which the Japanese should live. In other words, only an abstract interpretation of the Buddhist spirit, ignoring the position or the role of Japanese, would make Buddhism rootless from

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actuality.”

### II. HAPPINESS

—“I think that happiness is a zeal for life (*jinsei no hari* 人生の張り).”

—“When one feels zeal for anything, a cycle race or religion, for example, he is happy.”

—“A fixed or static definition of happiness does not satisfy modern young men.”

—“What makes one feel zeal for life, or that it is worth living?”

—“I find happiness in a deep association between man and man, and I feel that the power which brings this mutual association into being comes from behind or in front, or exists in my mind.”

—“Epicureanism in a materialistic sense has existed across the ages and in various countries of the world. It also lies within ourselves, so that it is impossible simply to reject it as a vulgar thought.”

Thus, the view of happiness from the standpoint of the past idealism was criticized.

—“A discussion of happiness without material security is useless. Life which does not have material stability is a pre-happiness state. There are many people in Japan who are leading such a sub-standard life. How should religion regard this point?”

—“It is man’s mind which feels happiness and in this sense happiness depends upon our mental attitude, which is fostered by religion. However, it is cruel to teach people who do not have any security, even at the lowest level of material life and under bad conditions, that happiness depends upon one’s mental attitude. Such an attitude must run counter to the spirit of religion.”

—“Religious leaders of the past were apt to talk of happiness in complete disregard of the lack of material security. Future leaders should make united efforts in the direction of guaranteeing material security.”

## COMMENTS BY BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

All agreed to this view, provided that it was understood that material stability alone does not constitute a happy life.

### III. MISFORTUNE

—"The karma-idea, which has been somewhat commonly held in Japan, is not liked by many moderns and is not thought proper to Buddhism."

—"The karma-idea in its proper sense, is an excellent Buddhist idea. I think it may be this that attracts most attention from Christians or foreigners. As for me, I understand that the karma-idea is based upon a deep conception of life (*inochi* 命) and that karma is the activity of man's life. I think that the deeper human relations become and the more frequently I experience association with the life of others, the stronger I feel the significance of karma."

As to the difference between the karma-idea and fatalism (*shukumei-ron* 宿命論) or (*unmei-ron* 運命論), the following significant opinions were expressed.

—"There is a difference between *shukumei* and *unmei*. *Shukumei* means a sort of prearrangement (*yotei-setsu* 予定説), while *unmei* is a gamble. This latter means that by his own will a man chooses one of two possibilities, when he is confronted with an acute situation where he must go either to the right or to the left. In this way he may improve his lot. This is called karma in Buddhism. In other words, when one is in a pinch, he stakes himself on the three karmas (*sangō* 三業) of body (*shin* 身), mouth (*ku* 口) and will (*i* 意). By doing so, his new karma further develops. Karma will not be clearly understood until one makes a serious gamble in which he may lose his whole life. Shinran said that he would have regretted nothing, if he had fallen into hell because of the temptation of Hōnen; because he staked himself on Hōnen's word. In this way Shinran seemed to feel karma."



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—"In *shukumei-ron*, it is an outside power that moves us; but in the karma-idea, we ourselves move. Here is a subjective volition. When a wheel is revolving the earth touches each point of the rim only momentarily. Likewise, when we ourselves move, a certain power comes to action from the universe and touches us like a flash."

—"In regard to the question of whether karma is an individual matter or a collective matter, there should be no discrimination between individual karma (*fugūgō* 不共業, that is, non-collective karma) and collective karma (*gūgō* 共業). Buddhism takes the position that man finds himself in a mutual relationship of one to all. Collective karma involves the non-collective karma and the latter includes the former."

## IV. SOCIAL REFORM

### Mental attitude or faith.

Regarding whether it is possible to preach that happiness depends upon the mental attitude or is gained by faith on the part of people who are leading such a miserable life that they want for today's food and cannot afford medical treatment when they are ill:

—"The first question is to provide them with food or medical treatment."

—"The mental attitude or faith on the part of the people who receive this aid must be considered. For example, whether one receives it in gratitude or regards it as his natural right would make a great difference in the degree of happiness in his life or the speed of his recovery from illness."

### Charitable works

—"Religion does not merely teach mental attitude. It has been endeavoring to save people in the material field, that is, by charitable works."

## COMMENTS BY BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

—"Charitable works, however, rest on the basis of a distinction between the one who bestows a favor and the one who receives it. The rich always enjoy praise for their practice of charity, and the poor are always compelled to be grateful for it. Herein lies the hypocrisy of charity. I agree with the Reverend Sōgen Aṣahina that the mere practice of benevolence without improving the political and economic conditions in which people need relief is not enough."

—"Charitable undertakings, however, ought to be continued until the completion of social reform, instead of being regarded casually."

No objection to this was expressed. In short, they felt that charitable undertakings should not make people forget or hinder the realization of a society in which there would be no discrimination between rich and poor.

### Communism

—"If some form of social reform is necessary, what method and means is preferred?"

—"The idea of communists that one should be angry with poverty and give up the moral idea of being content with honest poverty, contains some good points. There are not a few old Buddhist leaders, who simply reject the idea of strikes and thus unconsciously benefit conservative and reactionary people, though they themselves profess to be of the Middle Way."

—"Many Buddhist leaders lack a social consciousness and are ignorant of political and economic problems."

No one fully accepted the communist theory or approved a communist revolution. Most of them were skeptical or critical of communism. They approved the view of The Reverend Benkyō Shio that people in the USSR are working together and making an efforts to enrich their lives, and they also agreed with Prof. Nakamura, who pointed out the fact that in spite of the social reformation, there are many contradictions in the USSR. In this regard Professor Nishitani's view that, even under a condition

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of poverty and disease, one can boldly say that 'it is a good day, every day,' was approved by them, as was also Prof. Kaneko's comments concerning events at a certain silk factory, although the latter's expression was felt to be open to misunderstanding. Conversely, it was concluded that material improvement or social reformation alone cannot bring about a happy and peaceful world.

### V. HEALTH AND FAITH

Calmness of mind, that is, a sense of security strongly influences the healing of disease. In this regard, it was rather positively stated that faith was effective in healing disease. There were also many statements affirming the efficacy of prayer.

#### Prayer

—"Incantations and prayers (*kaji kitō* 加持祈禱) and the use of fire for invocation (*goma* 護摩, *homa*, Skt.) of divine power in Esoteric Buddhism, must not be regarded as an object in themselves, but as actually having an efficacy in the sense of a spiritual cure."

—"What happens when a prayer is offered in the case of an ill person who does not know about it?"

—"Prayer is not only a method for calming the mind. Some mysterious power from outside also affects the patient. It affects him even when he knows nothing about it."

—"Shinran opposed ordinary prayer. He insisted that one did not pray by his own effort, but that Amida made him pray, and that the power from Amida acts upon him."

—"Zen Buddhism has come to offer prayers, because of its connection with Shingon Esoteric Buddhism; but the proper standpoint of Zen Buddhism is also to oppose prayer. If prayer is accepted by Zen Buddhism, it should be regarded as a means of calming the mind. Therefore, one should not expect that Buddha will act upon him, even when he prays to Buddha, but should recognize prayer as one method by which the patient may penetrate his innermost self."

Thus it can be seen that in Buddhism the idea of prayer is not very clear.

• VI. PROBLEM OF SIN

—“Buddhism originally had a concept of sin which was a more fundamental state than the violation of precepts.”

**Sin in Buddhism and Christianity**

—“If so, how about the difference between the Buddhist and Christian idea of sin?”

—“In the case of Christianity, there is a God and turning one's back to Him constitutes sin. Sin in this sense does not exist in Buddhism. Buddhism teaches sin, but it teaches that sin is imperceptible (*fukatoku* 不可得). In other words, when one is possessed by a consciousness of sin, it produces suffering; so it is taught in the *Kan Fugen Kyō* 観普賢經 that since the mind is originally void (*kū* 空), sin and bliss has no lord' (*zaifuku mushu* 罪福無主). This is a characteristic of Buddhism.”

—“As to what corresponds to the idea of original sin in Christianity, Buddhism has original ignorance (*mumyō* 無明 *avidyā*, Skt.). In Christianity, however, original sin is that from which human life rises and to which life can be traced. In Buddhism we trace as far back as the point which transcends *vidyā* (*myō* 明; knowledge) or *avidyā* (*mumyō* 無明; ignorance).”

—“*Vidyā* and *avidyā* are Sanskrit terms which have the same root. What is regarded from one side as perfect, from the other side is imperfect. Originally they were not dualistic.”

—“Fundamentally there is neither *vidyā* nor *avidyā*.”

—“Since Buddhism definitely rejects disharmony, sin in Buddhism seems to me to mean the absence of harmony.”

—“From this viewpoint, doesn't it follow that attachment to something or clinging to one side is *avidyā*, the original sin, the source of evil, and the origin of suffering? If so, even when one commits adultery, if he is not attached to it, it does not constitute a sin.”

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—“It is true that in Buddhist history some Buddhists have advocated and practised such a theory. But even if the person concerned is indifferent, the partner is necessarily sacrificed and harmed. Moreover, it is actually inconceivable that such a person can continue to do evil to the end without blemish (*ten'i muhō* 天衣無縫). In short, this is merely an academic pseudo-enlightenment (*waru-zatori* 惡悟り), without having caught the deep meaning of the principles that ‘good and evil are not dual’ (*zen-aku funi* 善惡不二), that ‘sinfulness and blessedness have no lord’ (*zaifuku mushu* 罪福無主) and that ‘defilement is even enlightenment’ (*bonnō soku bodai* 煩惱即菩提).”

—“It then becomes possible to say, after completely recognizing and experiencing evil, sinfulness and defilement, they have no lord, or are void. If we had no evil, sinfulness or defilement, we could not to say that good and evil are not dual; that sinfulness and blessedness have no lord; or that defilement is even enlightenment.”

## VII. DEATH

### World after death

—“Death means to return to the world in which our life (*inochi* 命) arises. This world is different from the so-called Heaven or Pure Land.”

—“It may also be said that one returns to nothingness (*mu* 無). Of course this idea of nothingness does not mean the so-called ‘nothing.’ It is not non-existence in contrast with existence.”

—“It is the world transcending existence and non-existence.”

—“The world after death may be said to be either existing or non-existing, viewed from different standpoints, that to comment on it merely abstractly is of no use. The more important thing must be regarded as how to attain calmness of mind at the moment of dying.”

## COMMENTS BY BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

—"Which is more effective in calming the mind, belief that one may go to the Pure Land after his death or the idea that there is nothing after death?"

—"From a commonsense standpoint, the former may be more effective. However, to say that one must believe that there is a world after death, because believing so is effective in calming the mind, is the same as saying that one must think that he is rich despite being poor. Even though, from the standpoint of calming the mind, belief in the existence of the world after death is preferable, it cannot be said that such a world exists. Being preferable is a different matter from existence."

—"If seeking a world after death is a feeling common to human beings, it must be asked why such a feeling takes place. In other words, the desire to seek it arises because there is a world after death. If there is nothing, it would be impossible even to think about its existence or its form. Therefore, it cannot definitely be said that being desirable is totally different from existence."

—"It cannot always be said that the assumption of the existence of a world after death is more effective in calming the mind. If the existence is assumed, the assumption may give rise to various questions."

—"The proper standpoint of Buddhism lies in life and death every moment (*nennen shōji* 念々生死). In other words, we die every moment and live every moment. Therefore, the so-called world after death, the Pure Land or hell, is an expedient-view (*hōben-setsu* 方便説). I think that as a matter of fact, however, the expedient-view has prevailed so largely that Buddhism cannot turn around."

### Immortality of the soul (*reikon* 靈魂).

—"Buddhism does not deny the immortality of the soul, but I think that it aims at something broader and deeper."

—"It can be said that the past tendency of Buddhism has been to



## LIVING BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

recognize the soul. When we look back at Buddhist history, however, we find that many things which are not proper to Buddhism have become mixed with it. Views of the soul and memorial services to ancestral spirits may be examples of this. How to deal with these matters is an urgent problem which we modern Buddhists should solve. If we halfway leave Buddhism as it is, it may run away in an inconceivable direction."

—"If Buddhism denies the existence of soul, we must get rid of memorial service for ancestors."

—"As Prof. Nakamura said, however, Buddhism does not totally deny the existence of soul (*reikon* 靈魂). Therefore, the next question may be how to interpret the soul in Buddhism."

—"Memorial services for ancestors have some significance as a memorial to the deceased."

—"When we are in a service for our ancestors (*ekō* 回向), we cannot but be made conscious of the blood connection from generation to generation. This seems to be a power which drives men forward. Therefore, I am made to serve the ancestors rather than I serve them of my own accord."

## VIII. BUDDHA AND PURE LAND

—"In Zen Buddhism also we face a Buddha and pray for something, but it is understood that the Buddha and we are not basically different. When we actually pray, however, we place the Buddha in a position opposite to us. Therefore, we cannot deny, from the human standpoint, that we and Buddha are standing at different points."

An argument took place concerning whether or not to pray for something facing a Buddha is an expedient.

—"It is not a mere expedient. For example, in the chapter on 'Life and Death,' in the *Shōbōgenzō* (正法眼藏), Dōgen said, 'We solely give up our bodies and minds and throw them into the house of

## COMMENTS BY BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

Buddha; then the Buddha acts on his own initiative and we follow him . . . ' Nichiren, who insisted on the attainment of Buddhahood in this body (*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏) and that "this land is a land of eternal rest and light (*shido jakkō* 此土寂光), in his old age placed a Buddha opposite him and sought the Pure Land in his future life. The attitude of Dōgen and Nichiren in this regard was deeply founded on their experience in life and cannot simply be ignored as an expedient or a tentative teaching according to the follower's ability (*taiki seppō* 対機說法)."

—"Many of the visitors to Narita feel themselves to be friends of the deity, *Fudō* (不動). Disregarding rain and windy weather, they visit there and say "Good Morning" to the deity. Such people are very diligent in their business because they think that the deity is always keeping his eye upon them. Accordingly, their trade is prosperous. They believe that this prosperity is caused by the deity, *Fudō*. The mental attitude of these people is rather reasonable, so that their daily conversation gives us something instructive."

## IX. NON-KILLING

Due to lack of time, this problem of non-killing and capital punishment was not discussed.

## X. BUDDHISM AND THE EMPEROR-SYSTEM

—"Continuing the emperor as a symbol amounts to making him more a do-nothing. The emperor has meaning in endeavoring to establish good government. As long as the emperor is a decoration (*kazari* 飾り) of the state, it is stupid for us to pay taxes for this decoration."

—"Even if a competent emperor comes out for good government, the emperor-system cannot be approved. From the viewpoint of Buddhism, which denies discrimination on the basis of birth and family and stresses the equality of all, emperor worship cannot

## LIVING BUDDHISM IN JAPAN

be approved."

—"The emperor-system as national polity and emperor worship must be considered separately."

—"The two things cannot be considered separately, because the emperor-system means that those who are born in the Imperial Family will assume the throne. Therefore, this attitude necessarily lead us to emperor worship. As long as the emperor-system continues, emperor worship and respect for the Imperial Family will never disappear, and the old peers and distinguished families surrounding the Imperial Family will not become extinct."

—"Whether the emperor-system is better cannot be decided from the true character of Buddhism."

—"From a reasonable point of view, I think that it is better for us to have no emperor-system. I feel, however, that there is something, in the emperor-system which has continued to this time, which cannot simply be denied."

—"The Tokugawa Shogunate could have abolished the emperor system, if it had so desired. Nevertheless, it survived. There must have been something in this system which could not simply be denied."

—"As for me, I think it is better for us to maintain the emperor system in a somewhat improved form."

—"It is truly unreasonable that, simply because of birth in the Imperial Family, even an incompetent ascends the throne and that members of the Imperial Family stand above the people and are guaranteed a living far beyond that of common people."

—"If the hereditary system is abolished and a new system is established so that a competent person may become an emperor on the basis of his ability, this amounts to denying the emperor-system itself."

—"In ancient times Japan used to make emperors become Buddhists

## COMMENTS BY BUDDHIST SCHOLARS

and let them rule the country from the Buddhist standpoint. However, because of over-doing it, the results were not good."

—"I am afraid that if the emperor-system is abolished in Japan, Buddhism also would be eliminated. In Communist China, Buddhism is only remaining as an historic monument."

—"The Buddhism which has been connected with the emperor system may be abolished together with the abolition of the system; but Buddhism proper may not and cannot be abolished."

—"I think that the Buddhism which will be eliminated along with the abolition of the emperor-system ought to be abolished."

—"I think that if Japan is communized, Buddhism itself may be eliminated. It cannot be said, however, that it is right to abolish the Buddhism which will be eliminated under such conditions."

—"Can it be said that when Buddhism is conservative and reactionary it should be abolished, but that, if it is progressive, it is welcomed?"

—"As Communism and religion or Buddhism are fundamentally inconsistent, even if Buddhism is progressive, it apparently will be abolished."

Most participants in this discussion agreed that although these ten subjects seem naive, they involve basic problems, and that Buddhist priests or scholars should examine these problems more carefully

## GLOSSARY

**ahimsā** (Skt.) non-hurting as advocated by Gandhi.

**akirame** 諦め resignation.

**aku** 悪 evil.

**Amida Nyorai** 阿彌陀如來 *Amida* Buddha, *Amida* 阿彌陀 (Amita, Skt.), a name which combines both Amitābha (Skt.) (Infinite Light) and Amitāyus (Skt.) (Infinite Life). See also *nyorai*.

**ango** 安居 a monastic retreat.

**arahito-gami** 現人神 literally, "appear-man-god," that is, an apotheosized living person. Formerly applied to the Emperor.

**araya-shiki** 阿賴耶識 (*ālaya-vijñāna*, Skt.) *ālaya*-consciousness (*ālaya* means "store"), the store-consciousness, the foundation on which human consciousness is based. See also *shiki*.

**ātman** (Skt.) ego. See also *ga*.

**biku** 比丘 (*bhikṣu*, Skt.) a monk.

**bodai** 菩提 (*bodhi*, Skt.) enlightenment, wisdom (by which a man becomes a buddha).

**bonnō** 煩惱 passion, defilement. There are 108 passions or desires which are the cause of all suffering. The Buddhist rosary (*juzu* 数珠) has 108 beads to symbolize these.

**bonnō soku bodai** 煩惱即菩提 "Defilement is even enlightenment" Identity between passions and enlightenment.

**bosatsu** 菩薩 (bodhisattva, Skt.) one who seeks *bodai*, 菩提 (bodhi, Skt. enlightenment), one who practices the Buddha Way, benefitting others

as well as himself. The bodhisattva idea is the principal point in which Mahā-yāna Buddhism differs from Hīna-yāna Buddhism.

**Buddha** (Skt.) *Butsuda* 仏陀, *Butsu* 仏, *Hotoke* 仏; the Enlightend One, Awakened One; commonly applied to Sākya-muni Buddha but also applicable to any one who has attained "enlightenment". See also *Hotoke*.

**Buppō no mi** 仏法の身 the body of Buddha Law.

**busshitsu-teki kakutoku** 物質的獲得 aquisition of material goods.

**busshō** 仏性 the Buddha-nature.

**busshu** 仏種 the seed of Buddha.

**Butsu** 仏 (*Buddha*, Skt.) the Enlightened. See *Buddha* and *Hotoke*.

**butsudan** 仏壇 a Buddhist altar; usually refers to a home altar.

**butsudō** 仏道 the Buddha way.

**chūdō** 中道 (*madhyamā-pratīpad*, Skt.) the middle way.

**daichi-ishiki** 第一意識 the first consciousness.

**Dai Kichijō Kyō** 大吉祥經 (*Mahāmaṅgala-sutta*, Skt.) the scripture of "Great Prosperity," chapter 2, paragraph 4 of *Sutta-nipāta*; a collection of instructions and one of the oldest sūtras.

**Dengyō Daishi** 伝教大師 (767—822) the posthumous name of *Saichō* 最澄, the founder of Tendai Buddhism in Japan. *Daishi* 大師, literally, Great Teacher, is an honorary title which was formerly bestowed by the Emperor.

# GLOSSARY

**Dōgen** 道元(1200—1253) the founder of the Sōtō-sect of Zen Buddhism in Japan.

**dokuritsu shita sonzai-igi** 独立した存在意義 *raison d'être*. p. 19

**-eien-fumetsu** 永遠不滅 eternal. See also *fumetsu*.

**ekō** 回向 dedication of oneself to Buddha or to a good life, a service for ancestors.

**engi** 縁起 dependent origination, the chain of causation.

**Fudō** 不動 (*Acala*, Skt.) literally, unmovable; a deity commonly referred to mistakenly as the God of Fire. Functions in esoteric Buddhism as the protector and provider of worldly benefits. The Narita Fudō Temple in Chiba Prefecture is the most famous Fudō temple in Japan.

**fugū-gō** 不共業 non-collective karma, individual karma. See also *gūgō* and *gō*.

**fukatoku** 不可得 imperceptible.

**fumetsu** 不滅 immortal, indestructible.

**ga** 我 (*ātman*, Skt.) ego.

**genzai** 原罪 the original sin.

**gō** 業 (*karma*, Skt.) action or conduct with special reference to consequences.

**gōbyō** 業病 a malady caused by one's karma.

**gōen** 業縁 karma-cause.

**goma** 護摩 (*homa*, Skt.) an esoteric Buddhist service in which fire is used for the invocation of divine power.

**gō no sonzoku** 業の存続 the continuation of karma. See also *gō*.

**gūgō** 共業 common karma, collective

karma. See also *gō*.

**gyō** 行 action; one of five aggregates which constitute the spiritual and material world; the second link in the twelvefold chain of causation.

**Hachiman Daibosatsu** 八幡大菩薩 the apotheosized Emperor *Ōjin*.

**hibō** 誹謗 speaking ill of a person.

**higa** 非我 non self. See also *muga*.

**Hīna-yāna** (Skt.) Shōjō 小乗, literally, "Small Vehicle." This is regarded as a derogatory Mahā-yāna term. Hīna-Yāna Buddhism is Conservative Buddhism based on the Pāli Canon. The term Theravāda is preferred in Ceylon and Southeast Asian countries. See also Mahā-yāna.

**hō** 法 (*dharma*, Skt.) Law, the concept of Ultimate Truth.

**hōben** 方便 expedient.

**hōjin** 報身 (*sambhoga-kāya*, Skt.) the Reward Body, the blissful manifestation in the person of the Buddha, one of the three bodies of Buddha.

**Hoke Kyō** 法華經 the Lotus Sūtra. See *Myōhō Renge Kyō*.

**hokkai-riki** 法界力 the power of nature.

**Hōnen** 法然 (1133—1212) the founder of Jōdo Buddhism in Japan.

**hongan** 本願 the vow, the original vow. In Pure Land Buddhism this generally refers to the forty-eight vows of *Amida*.

**hōse** 法施 giving truth.

**hōsoku** 法則 law, regulations.

**hosshin** 法身 (*dharma-kāya*, Skt.) the Law Body, one of the three bodies of Buddha; the fundamental truth as the original state of Sākya-muni Buddha.



# GLOSSARY

**Hotoke** 仏 Buddha; in common parlance the Buddha and buddhas are often called *hotoke* in Japan; often used to refer to one who has died.

**ikikaeru** 生き返る live anew.

**inga** 因果 cause and effect.

**inga-ōhō** 因果応報 retribution.

**inga-ritsu** 因果律 causality.

**innen** 因縁 causality.

**ishiki-shozō** 意識所造 creation of the mind.

**jigō-jitoku** 自業自得 the natural consequence of one's deeds; as one sows, so one reaps.

**jihi** 慈悲 benevolence. **ji** 慈 (*maitri*, Skt.) giving joy, **hi** 悲 (*karuṇā*, Skt.) saving from suffering, but meanings are said to be interchangeable. Buddha's benevolence or Buddha's mind is said to be the Great Benevolence (*mahā-maitrī-mahā-karuṇā*, Skt.).

**jikaku** 自覺 self-awakening.

**jiko-ishiki** 自己意識 self-consciousness, ego.

**jinkaku-shin** 人格神 a kami(deity) with personality, a personal god.

**jissō** 実相 the real aspect, the real state.

**jittai-teki** 実体的 substantial.

**jōdo** 浄土 pure land, sometimes called paradise. The Pure Land sects constitute the largest group of Buddhists in Japan.

**ju** 受 sensation, one of five aggregates which constitute the spiritual and material world.

**jūzen no kimi** 十善の君 an emperor of ten virtues.

**kairitsu** 戒律 precepts.

**kaji kitō** 加持祈祷 incantations and prayers.

**kaji-riki** 加持力 the power of Buddha's aid.

**kamigakari** 神がかり the Shintō concept of being possessed by a *kami* (deity).

**Kan Fugen Kyō** 観音賢經 the postscript to the Lotus Sūtra, the scripture of repentance.

**kannen-ron** 観念論 idealism.

**Kannon** 観音 (*Avalokiteśvara*, Skt.) the Goddess of Mercy.

**Kegon Kyō** 華嚴經 (*Avatamsaka-sūtra*, Skt.) *Kegon* 華嚴, literally "flower-ornament," is a translation of *Avatamsaka* (Skt.), which denotes a wreath or garland. The *Kegon Sūtra* elucidates in detail the mystic doctrine of the Buddha *Vairocana* and the theory of unlimited causation or infinite mutual relationship.

**keshin** 化身 incarnation.

**kibō** 希望 hope. See also *negai*.

**kihan** 規範 a norm.

**kiritsu** 規律 discipline, regulations.

**kitō** 祈祷 prayer.

**kitō-sō** 祈祷僧 a prayer-priest.

**kokoro** 心 mind. *Shin* 心 and *seishin* 精神 are also used to express the idea of "mind".

**konpaku** 魂魄 soul, spirit. See also *reikon*.

**kotei-teki jiko** 固定的自己 fixed self.

**ku** 苦 suffering.

**kū** 空 (*śūnyatā*, Skt.) voidness, emptiness.

**kudoku-riki** 功德力 the power of one's effort.

**kūgan** 空觀 philosophy of emptiness.

**kuon-jitsujō no Shaka-muni-butsu** 久遠実成の釈迦牟尼仏 "Sākya-muni Buddha, who from eternity

# GLOSSARY

has realized Buddhahood." This concept is expounded in the *Nyorai Juryō Hon* of the Lotus Sūtra. p. 48

**kuon no Honbutsu** 久遠の本仏 the eternal Original Buddha. See also *kuon-jitsujō no Shaka-muni-butsu*. p. 50

**kuon no Hotoke** 久遠の仏 the eternal Buddha. See also *kuon no Honbutsu*.

**kyōden** 經典 (*sūtra*, Skt.) a scripture. **kyomu-shisō** 虚無思想 nihilism.

**Lotus Sūtra** See *Myōhō Renge Kyō*. **mae no yo** 前の世 the previous world. See also *zense*.

**Mahā-yāna** (Skt.) **Daijō** 大乘, literally "Great Vehicle," in contrast with *Hina-yāna*, "Small Vehicle." *Mahā-yāna* Buddhism is based on the Sanskrit Canon and the related scriptures of Tibet, China, and Japan. It lays stress on bodhisattva practice which seeks enlightenment not only for oneself but for others. See also *Hina-yāna* and *bosatsu*.

**mandara** 曼荼羅 (*maṇḍala*, Skt.) a diagrammatic representation of the cosmos which sets forth its spiritual meaning.

**Mani-hōju** 摩尼宝珠 the Gem; *hōju* 宝珠 is the translation of *mani* (Skt.), which means the gem purifying and lightening the world. **meyoi** 迷い illusion.

**metasu** 滅 mortal, destructible.

**mu** 無 nothingness, non-existence.

**muga** 無我 selflessness.

**mujō** 無常 transiency.

**muki** 無記 indescribable, undefinable.

**mumyō** 無明 (*avidyā*, Skt.) ignorance.

**mureikon-ron** 無靈魂論 the non-soul view.

**mushotoku** 無所得 non-ownership and non-profit, unpossessed, that is, without possessions.

**mushūjaku** 無執着 unattached.

**myō** 明 (*vidyā*, Skt.) knowledge. See also *mumyō*.

**Myōhō** 妙法 (*Saddharma*, Skt.) the Wonderful Law, the True Law, the Excellent Law, the Perfect Truth.

**Myōhō Renge Kyō** 妙法蓮華經 (*Saddharma-puṇḍarika-sūtra*, Skt.) the Lotus Sūtra, one of the most important of all *Mahā-yāna* scriptures, setting forth the doctrine of the One Vehicle, *Eka-yāna*, the Eternal Buddha, and the Way of Bodhisattvas.

**namu** 南無 (*namas*, Skt.) adoration.

**Namu Myōhō Renge Kyō** 南無妙法蓮華經 The Sacred Title (*Daimoku* 題目), which epitomizes the faith of Nichiren believers. It is translated by Anezaki as "Adoration to the Lotus of the Perfect Truth."

**negai** 願い vow, ideal, hope. The meaning of this term was a subject of discussion in these interviews. See p. 2 and 79. *Negai* is not hope in the sense of wishing for something; but is a conviction regarded as already being realized.

**nehan** 涅槃 (*nirvāṇa*, Skt.) literally, extinction; destruction of passions, enlightenment, liberation, eternal bliss, death.

**nenbutsu** 念仏 invocation of Amida's Name; "*Namu Amida Butsu*."

**nengan** 念願 wish, hope. See also

# GLOSSARY

*negai.*  
**nennen shōji** 念々生死 life and death every moment.

**Nichiren** 日蓮 (1222—1282) the founder of Nichiren Buddhism.

**nyorai** 如来 (*tathāgata*, Skt.) the highest title of Buddha; one who has arrived at the truth.

**ōjin** 応身 (*nirmāṇa-kāya*, Skt.) the Transformation Body; one of the three bodies of Buddha; the human form which Buddha assumed in his relations with mankind.

**raigō** 来迎 welcome; used exclusively in Pure Land Buddhism in reference to Amida's welcome into the Western Paradise.

**raise** 来世 the future life.

**raise-jōdo** 来世浄土 future pure land

**raise-shugi** 来世主義 a future-life-principle.

**reikai** 霊界 the world of souls. See p 47 for Abbot Shimizudani's unique usage.

**reikon** 靈魂 soul.

**risō** 理想 ideals. See *negai*.

**Rokkaku-dō** 六角堂 a temple of the Tendai Sect in Kyōto, established by *Shōtoku-taishi* 聖徳太子. It is said that while *Shinran* was there he had a revelation in a dream to obey *Hōnen*.

**Ryōzen Jōdo** 靈山浄土 the Paradise of the Vulture Peak.

**Saihō-jōdo** 西方浄土 the Western Pure Land.

**Sākya-muni Buddha** 釈迦牟尼仏陀 *Sākya-muni* (Skt.), the sage of the Sākya clan.

**sangha** (Skt.) *sō* 僧, *sōgya* 僧伽, the order of Buddhist monks

established by Sākya-muni.

**sangai yui isshin** 三界唯一心 the three worlds consisting of only one spirit.

**sange** 懺悔 repentance.

**sangō** 三業 three karmas; *shin* 身 (body), *ku* 口 (mouth), and *i* 意 (will).

**sanze-jōjū no jōdo** 三世常住の浄土 the Pure Land which is to be lived by man's three lives. p. 49

**sanze sanze** 三世三世 past, present, future in a recurring cycle. p. 40

**satori** 悟り enlightenment, comprehension.

**segaki** 施餓鬼 literally, almsgiving for the hungry spirits; mass for the repose of the dead.

**seishin** 精神 mind, spirit.

**seishin-shugi** 精神主義 idealism, spiritual-ism; used in contrast to materialism.

**Sekai-renpō** 世界連邦 the World Federation.

**senzai-ishiki** 潜在意識 the idea of the subconscious.

**senzo-hōyō** 先祖法要 memorial services for ancestors.

**seppō** 説法 a sermon.

**Shaba-soku-jōdo** 娑婆即浄土. "This world is the Pure Land itself"; *Shaba* (*sahā*, Skt.) means "the world of patience."

**Shakuson** 釈尊 Sākya-muni Buddha. q.v.

**shibun-hō** 四分法 fourfold division. See p. 18

**shidai fuchō** 四大不調 disorder of four elements; namely, earth, water, fire and air, of which the body is composed; disorder of these elements means bodily ill.

# GLOSSARY

ness. p. 27  
**shiki** 色 form; one of five aggregates which constitute the spiritual and material world.  
**shiki** 識 (*viñāna*, Skt.) consciousness, mental faculty of perception and cognition; one of five aggregates which constitute the spiritual and material world; the third link in the twelvefold chain of causation.  
**shin** 心 mind; See also *kokoro* and *seishin*.  
**shinjin** 信心 faith; a term characteristic of Buddhism, which fundamentally means the transparent and pure mind.  
**Shinran** 親鸞 (1173—1262) the founder of Jōdo Shin Buddhism.  
**Shōbō** 正法 the True Law. See also *Myōhō*.  
**Shōbō Genzō** 正法眼藏 the chief work of *Dōgen* 道元 (1200—1253), the founder of the *Sōtō*-sect.  
**shōji** 生死 life and death.  
**shujō** 衆生 living beings.  
**shukugō** 宿業 accumulated karma. See also *gō*.  
**shukumei-ron** 宿命論 fatalism.  
**shukuse no gō** 宿世の業 accumulated karma in previous lives. See also *shukugō*.  
**sō** 想 perception; one of five aggregates which constitute the spiritual and material world.  
**sokushin-jōbutsu** 即身成佛 attainment to Buddhahood in this body.  
**sōmoku jōbutsu** 草木成佛 plants attaining Buddhahood; the Mahāyāna Buddhist theory that even non-sentient beings, e. g. grass and trees, have the Buddha nature and become buddhas.

**sosen-kuyō** 祖先供養 memorial services for ancestors. See also *senzo-hōyō*.  
**sōzoku** 相続 (*saṃtāna*, Skt.) continuation.  
**taiki-seppō** 対機説法 a tentative teaching according to the follower's ability.  
**tanza** 端坐 sit rigidly.  
**tarikī** 他力 the other power.  
**ten'i-muhō** 天衣無縫 without blemish.  
**Tenshō Daijin** 天照大神 the Heavenly Ancestress, the Sun Goddess. Commonly called *Amaterasu Ōmikami*.  
**tsumi** 罪 sin. See also *zaigō*.  
**u** 有 existence.  
**unmei-setsu** 運命説 fatalism. See also *shukumei-ron*.  
**ushotoku** 有所得 ownership and profit, having possessions.  
**warui-koto** 悪い事 evil. See also *zaiaku* and *zaigō*.  
**waru-zatori** 悪悟り pseudo-enlightenment.  
**yoridokoro** 拠り所 foundation.  
**yotei-setsu** 予定説 the theory of pre-determination.  
**yūgen-sei** 有限性 limitation.  
**yuibutsu-shikan** 唯物史観 the materialistic conception of history  
**yuishiki** 唯識 pure consciousness. See also *shiki*.  
**yuishiki-ron** 唯識論 idealism. See also *kannen-ron* and *seishin-shugi*.  
**zaiaku-jinjū** 罪惡深重 grave sin accumulated in the past.  
**zaifuku-mushu** 罪福無主 "sinfulness and blessedness have no lord," that is, no substance. This expression is found in the *Kan Fugen Kyō* q. v.

## GLOSSARY

**zaigō** 罪業 sinful karma; see also *gō*.

**zaike** Bukkyō 在家仏教 laymen's Buddhism.

**zaise** 財施 offering of material goods.

**zazen** 坐禪 literally, sitting-meditation; a discipline for meditation

which is especially emphasized in *Zen*.

**zen'aku-funi** 善惡不二 non-duality of good and evil.

**zen'in** 善因 good cause.

**zenka** 善果 good effect.

**zense** 前世 the previous world.

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——10人の仏教指導者の回答——

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